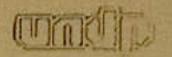


# Blue Sky Bulletin



Building a Partnership for Progress with Mongolia

ISSUE 1, NOVEMBER 1997

WWW.UN-MONGOLIA.MN

# Mongolia in the driver's seat of subregional AIDS battle

Mongolia took the lead in cooperating with its Northeast Asian neighbours in the light against STDs and HIV/AIDS at a conference on Ulaanhaatar from Havember 11 to 13, delegates from China, this Republic of Korea and Florigolia mention has rest time to discuss inter-double; a superation, especially attenuation in the southern and consimple time time to the southern and consimple time time to the southern and consimple time time to the southern and time time to the southern and time time to the southern and time time time.

During the three-stay meeting thigh ranking HTV/AIDS and STD specialists from the purceipaning countries focussed on the impact of the growing AIDS epidemic in floatheast Asia: Delegates from floath Korea were invited, but declined to send any representatives.

The meeting was further proof of the high priority given to HIV/AIDS prevention by the government. At the end of October, a large Mongolian delegation attended the regional Asia and Pacific congress on AIDS, white back home the government renewed its determination to fight STDs and HIV/AIDS by forming a National AIDS Committee chained by Prime Minister Eriksaikhan

The Utaardantar conference was sponsored by the United Nations Gevelopment Programmie and its New Deffi-based Asia and Papier Regional Project Office for HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Two regional UNDP consultant, Time McKay and Bruce Parnell, facilitated the meeting. As both of these consultants are Australian, not surprisingly they conducted the meeting in a relaxed fashion, though the locus was most defended to outcomes and increasing the locus was most defended to surprise the four countries (1.41). Some, though absent, was not forgotten) in an effort to maximize resources and learn from each school experience.

fine first day of the meeting allowed delegates to give country profiles, which outlined activities to date, current HIV infection rates and factors affecting the spread of HIV.

With an estimated 200,000 MIV infections (World Health Organization figures), China is certainly in a different league to its other Northeast Asian religibleors. Not only in absolute terms, but also in the soldly charging attitude of the Chinese government. Not unity in its capacity to mobilize too level government officials in ADDS prevention, but also in the increasingly enlightened attitude of the Chinese government for the frank and housest about the chark and housest and h

25. Chalamatery, a single mather of a reversed a sourcewater tone funded to their Site and the Tg. 650,000 food to their a provides business on Charachaeter.

# UN WER SITE GRABING UP FOR DECEMBER LAUNCH

Internet Surfers in Mongolia and around the worst are sequencing to discover the new United Nations incrumage. While the homepage worst to estimally immediate new December 1 (see page 2). Internet surfers can always view the week site as it in bordy constructed. With a homepage, Internet oberg minimo the sworld will decide as access the latest news we all the United Statutes agree to an European The Internet of the Internet oberg of the Internet oberg minimo and the second of the Internet of the Internet

# Mongolian Red Book published

At the Degraming of November the first copies of the second edition of the Mongolian Red Book arrived finant the printing house This long awards up-date less as sintangered species of arresals, glants, and fungs to Mongolia The Red Rook contains altogether 37% species. These are 76 ventioners amount to be appreciated as a second-contains altogether 37% species. These are 76 ventioners amount to be appreciated as a second-contains and the second-contains and

# Major Media Blitz to Launch Homepage, Citizen Service Centre

December 1 will be the official global faunch or the Mangalian United frations bornepage. Rather than quietly taking its place amongst the particular of homepages on the Internet, the UN web site will be the softeet of a high-profile publicity campaign. The idea is to combine the hunch of the homepage with the inauguration of Disambalian's localization Service Centre. It is computer and information centre that appears we access to, among other trains, the Internet. The centres are a project of UNDA's governance programme and the taken ment of Mangalia. The Softbactar Source centre will be the most to open, with general senders arready operating in the and the most representations.

La characteriste how the Interior and the URI homepage transports space closer to other countries, the manageration and treat demonstrate. Pobal chaff is because one conversation are the computer interior are presented to characteristic out the countries on December 1 and take the apportunity to be a result supportunity.

AIDS Team Gets to Work

rotanena the June "Fence Jahan of state-standing signed VOUL THE - Consect of Mongola, 11 (1970) appeal team on HIWARDS has been assembled Australian United Nations Your teer Nicholas Bates is working its made Adviser and Ms. Dyun as A final strative Assistant, A Nazonol Project as almotor will be appointed to one the cred of Revenuer, Representing the or resourcent is frational Project Elector (A Lakretest, director of policy and Darving at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The Ministry has provided office space in the STD Care Centre in the Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Glaanbaater. The project team has already started work, including assisting with the organizing of the subregional meeting, exploring ways to increase the availability of condoms and preparations for World AIOS Day

Course dishes the latest on data collection

The UNDP/GEF Mongolia Biodiversity Propert will give a tractical course for teologists and Peace Corps Volunteers waiting in the protected mean in Hongsha Bologists from the Mongehan State theoretically and its Learn to in Elegad as well as representatives from the Heratry for Nature and the European have also been mated to take part in the course. The course will be field be contenthe of Managedal, the friendship Chebrery's Camp. The charter is billed There are limit and any pro- a street drage trajected response west will specify the title division instituet, for an end-prof. as well as authoris to a named to lead in the state of the state of Converte Commitment Annual Lawrence the Day Nor taday? The state of the policy of the state of the committee ordentations to be the

TANK OF SHOOT AS IN STATE

For visitors to the Centre on December 1, an online chat and the place between UB and the other two Citizen Service Centres in 1 and Oberkhangai. In this way, visitors to the Centre will be it is see for themselves the expanding world of information that internet.

The UN homepage will soon became the largest in Manyana is contributions from all the Dotted Nations argencies.

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In the Last

# THREE MELICS OF ENDLESS EMPTINESS

areas. As a part of this cooperation, I, as UNV William Biologist of the Managest and the Managest of the Mongolar Brainweat, Project, spent three weeks in October in the resets of strong streets projected as a of Khondof Sandag, working with Mr. Tomoropab, P. Strong Diologist of Strong Park in the east. At present the two protectes in the same administration, located in Hatgalin Khonsgo Armag.

Renchmikturable and Ulaan Uni Soums representing unique ecosystems and factorities. The 200 000 ha protected area was established in June 1997 to protect the globalis, endangered wild mountain sheep, argali (Over arminor). Aside from the angel (the protected area is inhabited by another rare mamma), the wild mountain grad, the (Capra sibinos).

The purpose of my visit was to test in the field a survey methodology that is used to argain and their studies in Central Asian and Himalayan countries. The methodology of developed by the International Snew Leopard Trust for conducting consuses of cases leopard proy species. Another objective was to teach Mr. Tomorsukh this methodology. As the methodology is widely used in many countries and common database on some leopard proy species is being developed by the Trust it is extremely important that the same methodology is used in all the snow leopard range countries in order to specialize data from each country. Mr. Tomorsukh as the park biologist is as a responsition to start utilizing this methodology. This methodology will be raught in the Biodiversity Project's 'Data collection and analysis methodology' training coasts in early Decignition. As a third objective I also wanted to experience the mountains, use the case mountain steep and goat in their natural environment and learn from Mr. Tomorsukh about their ecology. Mr. James Boyd, a Peace Corps Volunteer who was an the Khowson National Park, took part in the survey as my translator.

The three weeks were beautiful snow coverest mountains, wild amonals, no enter people, goal (domestic!) must made on the and encless emptiness of the addresses. The survey methodology worked successfully in the field. Mr. Tomorgan sents the methodology and will start away a in subsequent surveys. According to prefer may result and one survey, the ample population of the adol Sandag is small fast order the other hand the domestic must be prefer that the start the distribution of the surveys are the survey and public was expensed in the surprising to produce the surprising developing and the surveys are public was expensed to produce the surprising developing and the people of the surprising developing the people of the surprising and public was extracted and public and public was expensed to the surprising developing the people of the surprising and public was extracted and public and public was extracted and public and pu

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AIDS (cont. from p.1)

Just a few years ago China advocated mandatory testing of 'at-risk' groups and sought to identify AIDS as a foreign, western disease which would not affect Chinese people. But the rapid spread of HIV among injecting drug users in provinces such as Yunnan has shocked political leaders out of complacency, pushing them to find out more about HIV and to recognize the social and economic implications of a widespread epidemic. Delegates from South Korea spoke of what is still a relatively small epidemic (an estimated 2,000 infections) and the high level of discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS. This raised the serious question of how people can be encouraged to be tested for the HIV virus, both in order to gain greater epidemiological information and to begin appropriate treatment as early as possible. The Mongolian delegates placed particular emphasis on the link between HIV and STDs: Mongolia has just one known case of HIV infection but high levels of STDs. Expenence in other countries has shown this to be indicative of low levels of condom usage - a perfect environment for the spread of HIV.

Over the three days delegates exchanged ideas in a spirit of cooperation, and willingness to learn. The extensive experience of China in responding to the epidemic gave Mongolian delegates many ideas for intercountry cooperation.

and ways in which to enhance our own response. Sout-Korea and Mongolia, with their close ties, also came out many ideas for cooperation, especially in the areas of publiadvocacy and STD management.

The meeting wrapped up with an agreement to cooperate or activities for the next two years, using Mongolia as the organizing base.

What will happen:

joint activities in social research.

 inter-country meetings focusing on migration populations and the high risk of HIV transmission of border areas.

policy-making and advocacy amongst national an

regional government officials.

The meeting ended on a positive note with many thandirected to the Mongolian delegation for hosting the meeting and the expectation of increasing cooperation and intercountry activity over the next two years. Much of this activiwill be supported by the regional UNDP project, but supporfrom other activities will also be necessary if the hopes of stopping the spread of HIV and of reducing STD infection, are to be realized.

By Nicholas Bates, UNY AIDS Health Adviser

The Mongolia delegation to the 4th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific joined with more than 3,000 delegates in Manila, Philippines to sign the rollowing manifesto.

Manila Manifesto.

Buildia sustainable regional network of exchange and collaboration.

Implement the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Ruman Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Guild.

Increase the allocation of runes in national and local budges through uninovation and advocacy.

Further dentity, document and replicate our successful hesponses.

Focus attention on children by outhand women regardingly bliefability in skand harm replication.

Mainstream STD/HIV/AIDS into all reproductive health and ramily planning errors.

Undertakelimedical research occusing on costerior times of ments and social support or all people; infects of with him to the convention of appropriate regiments and social support or all people; infects of with him to the convention of children weather and women.

# DON'T OVERLOOK MONGOLIA'S LARGEST DEVELOPMENT

The Reference Unit in the UNDP office is open for your use. Up to 2,500 publications, books and reports on development issues in Mongolia are available. The Reference Unit's specialty is United Nations publications, with a wide selection of documents from all the UN agencies like UNFPA, WHO, ILO, ESCAP, FAO, etc. The Unit is also multimedia, with a slide and photo archive and videos.

All the materials are catalogued in the oser-friendly computerized system

We have up to date youngs, documents and magazines

of the UN agencie.

Regular English and Mongolian nevispopers and magazines like "Ardyn Letti", "Zasgun Gaziya Mestee", "Mongoli Messenger", "The Economist", "Imance and Development", International Ferald Interne", "Tar

Eastern Economic Review" are also kept.

You will enjoy the services of the Reference Unit Assistant in helping you to use the RU and making photocopies if required.

 Soon all UNDP projects will have a common library network to draw the services closer to users and make a better information exchange.

# Reference Unit Is Expanding

With the beginning of the new year the Reference Doct will be moved to an old Public Embassy building next to UNDP as the Doc becomes more user friendly. The new space will offer visitors place to read and a suit of cyber cafe with computers connected to the Internet. In time, this could develop into a suit stop the information centre.

By B. Zottuya, UNDP Information Assistant

You are most welcome to use the Reference Unit any time between 09:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:30, Honday through Friday.

"Let's make life better!" contest swamped with entries

Hundreds of young and enthusiastic men and women from across Mongolia, from all aimags have been participating already in the United Nations contest 1997: Let's Make Life Better. An initiative of the United Nations in Mongolia, the contest was launched in celebration of United Nations Day and to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (24 October 1997). The contest offers young people one thousand dollars to invest in their Let's Make Life Better-project. The contest was launched with a national newspaper advertising campaign and pamphlets are being distributed to all schools and universities. The United Nations is appealing to men and women



between 20 and 30 years old to design their own small and local development project, generating ideas and energy on what preoccupies youth in Mongolia - in their own communities at school, at home or anywhere else. So far over 78 project proposals have been received by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, "Let's Make Life Better will continue until 15 December 1997. The winners will be invited by the United Napions as soon as the deadline has passed for interviews with UN-specialists to get their projects implemented for more details: The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Jerry van Mounk, telephone

321939 or 320140 (ext.116) and email mourik@undp.org.com (24 hours a day)

Activals and Departures

Nr. Maidar Sanaa joined the office in October as a Procurement Assistant Operations Section. Ms. Lone Jensen, Baresh Junior Professional Officer (JPO) finished her contract with UNDP on October 1 and has taken up her new pesting in the UNDP office in bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Finish UNV Programme Officer Ms. Palvi Ahonen has returned to her hameland, and filiping UNV MS. Betty Chua has taken her place, Danish JPO Ms. Pie Meulenkamp joined the Pove ty Alleviation Team on October 25, Ms. Ch. Batdolger, Budget/Finance Assistant joined UNDP as well as Mr. Ts. Ganbat as an Office Technologist. After three years working for UNDP in Mongolia, Danish JPO Mr. Jorn Sprenson, Team Leader for Natural Resources and Environmental Issues, left for reassignment to headquarters in New York at the beginning of November. Australian UNV Mr. Nicholes Bates has arrived and been assigned to AIDS/HIV/STD Project Team (MON/97/203). Ms. P. Dagmidmaa joined the office as a Senior Secretary for the NEX Unit. Also Ms. Organisar is with the Natural Resources Team from now on in replacement of Ms. Arvinzaya, who has left to study for her. Master's Degree in Germany. Ms. Mashbilleg, UNFPA Programme Assistant is continuing her Ph.D in London, England, UNV Minerva Coronacion, horticulturalist and development manager, has arrived from the Philippines to work in rural business promotion in Dongobi aimag.

Mongolian Red Book (cont. P.1)

The second edition has 150 species more than the first edition, which was published in 1987. The book is the result of research conducted by thirty Mongokan scholars for 4 years. A complete hat of the species included in the Red Book will be published on the Biodiversity web site thttp://www.mongolaonline.mn/btz/redbook.htm) (original text published in the Mangolian Conservation Newsletter, editor Rogier Gruys, Associate Expert, UNDP/GEF Mongoria Biodiversity Project; adapted by Sanna-Kaisa Juvenien, UNV Specialist in Wildlife Biologist, UNDP/GLF Mengolia Biochversity Project)

#### Next issue!

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indicated for the newsletter are free. Present with its cost your address and see and out. cast the recodester to you straight away.

UN Socretary-General Invited to visit Monpollal

During an October 6 meeting in New York, Monoclian imhilster/or external relations Sh. Ataoperel Invited United Nations secretary-pen-Koft Arman sto visit Mongolia. While expressing grattude for UN assistance. Mr. Ntangerel sire the Mongolian government's support for the cogoing reforms to the UN. He also emphasized in cooperation with the UN system is a key plant Mongolia's foreign policy.

Up Close and Personal

An exclusive interview with the woman who worked for the angest none in Union D. Many Chene). Service Finance Assessment

When did you join the UN? 14 1982

How do you see the difference of UNDE at time you started and now?

There is a boundifficulties of CASDI at the tax and a and now the tory we had evely Robert of Parish Sel Representative out recommended sentence services system), which means pales and activities were Shouther of people, at the tone I worked there were local staff and Consensual school is not covered. HOW

is there anything that you want to change the office?

We need to have common premoses for all UN ageto laye common services. I mean we could rave me-What do you expect from people surround:

Lexpect them to be hones; and open with the sense humour

What is your background?

- International relations

How many children do you have?

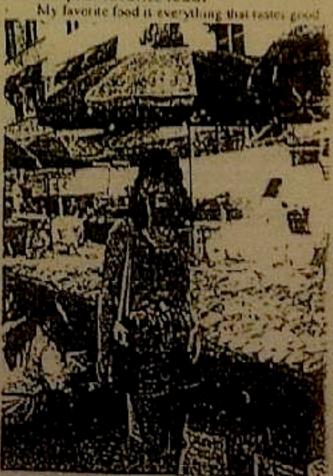
- I have 3 children

What is your hobby?

- Sewing and knitting

What is your favorite color?

My favorite colors are black, red and white because are easy to match with each other and web other coll-What is your favorite food?





# Blue Sky Bulletin



Issue #2, January 1998 Happy New Year!

# Small loans bring big opportunities

UNDP has tentatively contracted an American NGO to assist in distributing over US \$600,000 in microcredit loans. Called Microstart, the fund was established by UNDP after last summer's microcredit summit in Ulaanbaatar. The project's total cost is US \$1 million, with a third of the funds being allocated to service provider ACDI/VOCI and the salaries of loan officers in all 21 aimags.

The project kicks off at the start of 1998 once all the loan officers, the so-called international and local Technical Support Providers (ITSP, LTSP), have been hired.

Ms. Sukhjargalmaa, Poverty Eradica-

tion Programme Officer, said Microstart is urgently needed. "The main problem for the poor is their access to credit. The Microstart project will provide this opportunity to the poor for income-generating activities."

Across Mongolia there is a desperate need for access to credit. Many who want to start businesses can't because the banks are unwilling to give loans to the poor. Another objective of Microstart is to promote the development of microfinancing organizations at the grassroots level. It is hoped, once established, these institutions will build the foundations for economic opportunity for the poor.

# AIDS awareness campaign gets a boost

World AIDS Day on December 1 took a new twist in Mongolia with the launching of the premiere issue of the Mongolian AIDS Bulletin and the country's first AIDS fundraiser.



буй хүүхдүүд

The bi-monthly Bulletin is endorsed by the National AIDS Committee, headed by Prime Minister Enkhsaikhan, and is intended to support new strategies to combat STDs and HIV/AIDS. Over 5,000 copies of the Bulletin are being distributed across the country.

Dr. Altanchimeg, the Bulletin's Editor-in-Chief, launched the magazine at Mongolia's first AIDS fundraiser. Held at an Ulaanbaatar disco, the benefit raised more than Tg 100,000 to be used for AIDS prevention activities.

In partnership with the Government of Mongolia, posters were distributed to bars, restaurants and markets on December 1. Buses and trolley buses played over 200 audio cassettes giving advice on STD/HIV/AIDS prevention. The media blitz also included televi sion and radio programming. According to Mr. Davaajav, head of Ulaanbaatar's STD Care Centre, 200,000 people were in volved in December 1 activities.

# United Nations Homepage a success!

After only one month and with no advertising, the United Nations homepage has already had more than 377 visitors from around the world. The busiest day was December 19, when 21 Internet users explored the site. Home to all the United Nations agencies working in Mongolia, the site also offers the latest news on UN activities here.

There are currently more than 70 Internet sites on Mongolia, compared to just one this time last year. While around 40 per cent of the visitors to the UN site were from the United States, the rest span an impressive range of countries. Hits were recorded from Mongolia, Germany, Holland, Japan, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Russia, France, Portugal, Belgium, Taiwan, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Sri Lanka, Slovenia and Poland.

The guestbook recorded a wide range of interests in the homepage.

From Holland, Jaap Tjassens Keiser asked, "It is interesting to find Mongolia is accessible through e-mail. Mongolian people tell me poverty is increasing. How is the situation at this moment?"

Dorj from Japan was quick and to the point with "Cool!! Keep it up!"

Some of the comments from Mongolians were frank and hard-hitting. H. Haliun said. "If the United Nations is in Mongolia, why are there so many poor and homeless children. old people and adults?" H. Hongorzul said."I expect that the poor people and homeless are all over the world, but in Mongolia, day by day, there are more and more. ...I know that some people are getting protest against the government."

Advertisements will be placed in Mongolian and international newspapers/magazines to promote the site.

Source: NedStat



# Where the Steppe Meets

Sustainable Development in Mongolia

United Nations Homepage: <a href="www.un-mongolia.mn">www.un-mongolia.mn</a> E-mail: <a href="dsouth@undp.org.mn">dsouth@undp.org.mn</a>



A UNDP/PAPO team delivered donated clothes from World Vision to this daycare centre in Dornogovi aimag.

# Mongolia to learn from New Zealand reform experience

A group of government officials (Minister of Finance, parliamentarians and others) headed to New Zealand to undertake an overall assessment and review of New Zealand reform process and its implementation in practice. The study tour to New Zealand and Australia has been arranged by UNDP in close cooperation with the Asian Development Bank.

# Contents:

Small loans bring big opportunities
AIDS Day benefit
UN website a success
News in a Flash
In the Field
UNDP fundraising activities
UNV News
Up Close and Personal

Arrivals/Departures

## Blue Sky Bulletin January 1998

#### News in a flash

The famous cheese factory in Altanbulag soum, providing gouda-style cheese, is set to expand soon. The project is establishing another factory in Atar soum, which is projected to be completed by the end of 1998. It will produce a range of dairy products including cheese, vogurt, Mongolian quark and creams.

Nations The United Resident Coordinator's office has been overwhelmed by the response to the Let's Make Life Better contest. More than 600 project proposals from Mongolian youth between 20 and 30 have been received.

Back in October, youth across the country were asked to dream about a better Mongolia. They were asked to think of a small-scale project that would truly make life better in their community. The winning project receives US \$1,000 and the advice of UN development workers.

Jerry van Mourik, Support Officer to the UN Resident Coordinator, estimates it will take at least two months to sift through all the proposals before a winner can be announced.

Six regional training centres for journal ists opened at the beginning of November. Located in Uvurkhangai, Zavkhan, Dundgovi, Khovd, Khentii and Darkhan-Uul aimags, the centres are satellite offices of the Press Institute of Mongolia.

The centres are part of an innovative concept to provide not only training to journalists, but also access to advocacy support, an information database and a venue to hold press conferences.

Journalists outside of Ulaanbaatar suffer from many handicaps, including poor communications with the capital and the outside world. They are also disadvantaged when it comes to support from fellow journalists, who are few and far between in the countryside.

Ariunbat. Regional Programme Coordinator at the Press Institute, believes information technology is an essential tool for all journalists.

"There are windows of cooperation between these training centres and Citizen Information Service Centres (a project of UNDP's governance programme). Journalists could use the computer facility of the CISCs to access the latest information. It is difficult to imagine today's journalists without access to this kind of technology."

The centres are funded under UNDP's Consolidation of Democracy through Strengthening of Journalism Project.



Dutch Ambassador gets a whiff of good gouda

#### Mongolia discovers fields of gold

By Laura Ryser, MAP-21 Project Adviser

At a december 4 workshop, independent construction contractors were encouraged to go into building energy-efficient houses out of straw bales. Calling straw bales "fields of gold" ready to be "mined", UNDP Resident Representative Douglas Gardner told the gathering at the Press Institute that energy-efficient housing is ripe for private-sector involvement. Approximately 85 people from nine aimags, including representatives of key ministries, attended the workshop organized by MAP-21, UNDP and the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA).

Besides reducing heating costs by up to 90 per cent, this industry has enormous potential to create employment. So far, UNDP has constructed a health clinic and a centre for the Mongolian Women's Federation. The Poverty Alleviation Programme Office has constructed five buildings, ADRA is constructing six and the city of Ulaanbaatar has built 35 buildings. Over the next couple of years, UNDP will be building approximately 98 more super-insulated buildings. 163 people have been exposed to on-the-job training on constructing straw-bale buildings. A fine example of opening more opportunity for people is Ms. Oyunchimeg, According to Mr. S. Ganbold, National Project Manager, "Oyunchimeg is a mother from Sukhbaatar aimag, who was previously unemployed. Today, she has a teacher certificate. In the future she would like to organize a construction crew for straw-bale buildings, including private homes for Sukhbaatar and other places."

Mr. N. Tsend, Sustainable Development Officer, said "We usually mine gold from deposits. But now we have an opportunity to extract gold from straw."

#### Tumen River regional project is to expand

Intergovernmental meetings in Beijing (17-18 November 1997) brought together vice ministers and government officials from the member countries of the UNDP Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP) -Mongolia, China. South and North Korea and Russia. The meeting was the third since the signing of the agreement to establish the Tumen Intergovernmental Institutions at the United Nations in 1995. UNDP's core contribution for technical assistance for the development of the Tumen region amounts to US \$3.4 million for the period from 1997 to 1999. The UNDP support will be facilitating regional cooperation in trade development, investment promotion and environmental management while promoting sustainable economic and social development in Northeast Asia and the Tumen River Economic Development Area (TREDA) in particular.

The next intergovernmental meeting is announced to be held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in August 1998.

#### Up Close and Personal

Exclusive interview with Ms. D. Jargalsaikhan. Administrative Officer, UNDP

When did you join the UN? February, 1993

How do you see the difference between the UNDP at the time you started and now?

Everything is in a constant change as well as our office. I strongly believe in that whatever is the change it is aimed at making our life and our office better every day.



What do you expect from people surrounding you? Not much, really. Just be friendly and always remem ber that we are all members of a big UN FAMILY!!!

What is your background? Interpreter/translator of Spanish, English and Rus sian.

(cont. on page 4)

## Blue Sky Bulletin January 1998

#### In the field

#### The View From Murun

By Matthew Heller, Khuvsgul-based UNV

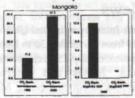
"How can people survive living like this?" was all I could think during my first trip to the countryside in Khuvsgul aimag. I went with my national UNV counterpart and a financial officer from the aimag central government to Tunel soum. I wanted to see for myself the situation in rural villages in Khuvsgul. Tunel is only 45 km from Murun, the aimag capital, but over half the population lives below the poverty line and a third live in "extreme poverty." This means less than half the population has a monthly income of Tg 9,420 or US \$11.77, and a third has less then Tg 6,500 per month or US \$8.12. These kinds of numbers shed a different light on international UNVs fighting for a pay increase from Bonn. It is understandable why they don't understand when I introduce myself as a volunteer yet make more than 77 times what they do in a month.

It is a myth that herders are self-sufficient and only people in cities and aimag centres are suffering. The statistics on poor households in Khuvsgul indicate that many of them are herders. They are families living in remote areas, they usually have between four and eight children, and less then 20 head of livestock per family member. Their herds are not sustainable, they cannot provide themselves with a sufficient amount of meat, nor money to buy flour or tea. There is not enough grazing land and when people migrate to their seasonal pastures they often find another family's herd has grazed there already.

I set out to do a needs assessment of the aimag, but soon I realized that I would only have to sit in my office and wait for people to come to me. After several outreach programs to the public through the aimag's media, people began to steadily pour into my office. The head of the Veterinary Hospital wants me to help get a new laboratory to test the quality of meat in the market. Soum and bag governors come in with maps and diagrams, plans for farms and cultural centres and bread factories, hoping I will give them money. A poor man wants to take me to his house for lunch to see how his family lives - he says he has no wood and he is cold, no clothes for his children so they can't go to school, no food so his family starves; skills so he cannot work. He asks, "Won't you tell the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office to give me a loan? You can do that. can't you? My family needs it so very badly . . ." Ordinary people come in just to talk with me; they have heard there is a foreigner working in the government building who speaks Mongolian. They tell me to come home with them, meet their family, teach their children English.

Establishing a Citizen Information Service Centre has been the main thrust of UNDP's Decentralization and Democracy Support project this fall. Presently the aimag CISC is a library of sorts, with information on international aid projects being implemented in the aimag, as well as information on Mongolian laws concerning human rights and democracy. In January, Khuvsgul aimag will become the third aimag equipped with a working CISC with computers, printers, and a copy machine. With the new modernized CISC, we hope to attract more of the public and increase participation of citizens in decision making of local government issues. Three soum governors have also expressed a desire to establish similar CISCs in their areas, and with our modern equipment, it should be easy to outfit and update these remote Centres with information concerning local governance strate-

We have begun teaching seminars at the soum and bag level about participatory methods of self- governance. These will support grassroots activism, enabling communities to get together and initiate development on their own while consciously involving all sectors, especially women and the poor. For development to be sustainable, those directly effected must decide on the solution; only they themselves know what issues are most important.



Mongolia tops in production of greenhouse gases per person

Mongolia's delegates to December's Kyoto convention on climate change heard that their country is producing twice the global average in greenhouse gases (GHG). Global warming for the last 50 years has had a negative effect on Mongolia's development, including poor health because of pollution, desertification, water tables drying up and disruption of livestock.

The Mongolian delegation to the conference consisted of the Minister of Nature and Environment Mr. Ts. Adyasuren, and researchers and government officials. At an Ulaanbaatar press conference after Kyoto, Mr. D. Dagvadorj, Secretary of the Meteorological Institute, said more than 60 per cent of GHG in Mongolia is coming from power stations. With assistance from the Asian Development Bank, a research project was carried out to reduce the GHG. In the future it is important to take measures to decrease coal use, introduce other sources of energy (solar, wind power), control vehicle pollution and improve plantation of trees. If these measures are taken by 2020, it is possible to reduce GHG by 11 per cent. The Government says that in 1995 about 10 million tons of GHG was produced in Mongolia.

#### News in a flash

Journalists working for electronic media will soon be able to make use of a new training facility to be established at the Press Institute of Mongolia. The facility will include advanced radio and TV equipment and is being funded by the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the communications arm of UNESCO.

The Press Institute of Mongolia applied for the project last year and the project was approved earlier this year with IPDC donating a total of US \$37,000. The funding will cover the purchase of equipment for the studio and the renovation and sound-proofing of a room at the PIM, which will function as a studio. Various training programmes are to be scheduled following the completion of the renovation of and installation of the equipment in the studio.

UNDP's "Think Tank" project has made many Mongolian workers happy, convincing the Government of Mongolia to legislate a five-day work week. Passed by Parliament in December, the shorter work week began with the new year. Prime Minister Enkhsaikhan called the move an opportunity for all Mongolians, leaving more time for family care, leisure, running small businesses, earning extra income and improving education.

By working fewer days, more than Tg 2 billion will be saved since buildings will not be heated and the lights turned off on Saturdays. It is believed this will result in salary increases of 15 per cent and the creation of 6,000 jobs.

The "Think Tank" is part of UNDP's Governance and Economic Transition Programme, and is meant to be a topical forum for policy debate based on new research.

On 5 December 1997, the number of Citizen Information Service Centres (CISC) increased by one. Funded under a UNDP project to increase the free flow of information, the CISC is located in Ulaanbaatar's mayor's office, just steps away from the famous Sukhbaatar Square.

Equipped with eight computers and a small reference library, the centre is linked to other CISCs (in Tuv and



Uvurkhangai aimags), to the Internet and to Government of Mongolia databases. The next CISCs will be open in Khuvsgul and Khovd aimags.

Address of the CISC in Ulaanbaatar: Sukhbaatar square, AGFA photo agency.



### UNDP fundraising activities

#### Pre-school education

from the beginning of 1998, a three-year preschool education project will start its implementation upon the signing of the project document by UNDP and the Government of Mongolia (Ministry of Science, Technology, Education and Culture). The project is costshared between the Government of Netherlands (US\$1,050,000) and Save the Children Fund (US\$480,000).

The assistance will be channeled through the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office. Activities include kindergarten repairs and establishment of ger kindergartens, outreach to very poor households, establishment of community kindergartens and training of community education volunteers, preparatory courses for entrants to basic education, toy production and preparation of materials, establishment of kindergarten farms.

The Mongolian government input is Tg 24 billion for a three year period.

#### **Enterprise Restructuring**

A total of US \$2,603,800 is being mobilized from the Dutch government for enterprise restructuring in Mongolia. The project objective is to strengthen enterprises in the transition to a market economy, by building management capacities of executives in a selected group of enterprises in reforming their operations, supporting the resolve of Mongolian institutions to undertake reform of viable enterprises. The project is expected to help create a more dynamic private sector.

#### Poverty

The UNDP-funded Poverty Alleviation project is being amended due to a SIDA (Sweden) contribution of US \$1,998,200, agreed but not yet approved. The input will be utilized for the National Poverty Alleviation Programme support activities, enabling the Government to support income- and employment-generation activities for 10,000 poor households and poor women, while expanding the national UNV programme.

## Arrivals/Departures

Ms. S. Tuul, Personal Assistant to the RR, has moved to the US to study and has been replaced by Mr. Tuvshin, former GET Team Programme Clerk, Mr. Paul Grocnewegen, JPO from the Netherlands is to take Mr. Sorenson's place for the Natural Resources Team, Ms. Minerva

Coronacion (Philippines) joined the office as a UNV Specialist in Rural Business Promotion, Dundgobi Aimag, Ms. Catherine Johnson, UNV Documentalist for the Press Institute is expected to arrive on 21 January, Mr. Ajamdar Rai, UNV Family Farming Specialist for INT/97/V01-Support to Pilot UNV/GTZ Collaboration in China, Cambodia and Mongolia is scheduled to arrive in the last week of January.



#### New publication explains UNDP in Mongolia

Taking its name from UNDP's compact with the Mongolian Government, Partnership for Progress is a 10-page colour brochure that details the recent history of Mongolia and the work of UNDP. A publication of UNDP Mongolia's Communications Office, the brochure is just one part of a larger strategy to better explain development issues and UNDP's role. At the end of January, a new 50-page book, The Guide to UNDP in Mongolia, will be available in English and Mongolian. This book details each UNDP project and offers a directory of contacts and key information on Mongolia. As with all UNDP materials, Internet surfers can find copies of publications at the United Nations Homepage, www.un-mongolia.mn. Copies of all publications are also available from the Communications Office.

#### **UNV News**

he Fourth Intergovernmental UNV meeting was held from November 30 to December 4 in Bonn. Approximately 250 representatives of governments, NGOs and international organisations took part in the meeting. Ms. Onon, National Project Coordinator, and Ms. Ariuna, Decentralization Project, participated from Mongolia. "In general the major subject of the meeting was the role of UNVs, both international and national, in the 21st century," said Ms. Onon.

At the moment, 51 international and national UNVs are working in Mongolia.

(cont. from page 2) How many children have you got? I have two lovely girls.

What is your hobby? Reading (the topic varies depending on the mood and life/work situation)

Your favourite band (singer)?

"Chingis Khan" band and its famous pop singer

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words.

The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published on the first of every month. The next deadline for submissions is January 18.

All submissions must be sent to B. Zoltuya, Information Assistant, c/o Ms. Elbegzaya,

ecember 5 is set aside as a day to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism and the work of volunteers.

This year, UNVs joined other volunteers in Mongolia and NGOs to collect secondhand clothes for distribution to street children. the homeless and the poor and disabled. A total of over 30 boxes of clothes were delivered. At the Art Gallery an NGO exhibition took place, including a performance by blind singers.

Jargalsaikhan (not for the namesake). I like all his songs, they are all beautiful.

Are you happy? Why?

Yes, I am happy because I have a lovely family and good friends who are always with me. And of course a "crazy" job which does bring me a satisfaction as well as an appreciation for it.

UNDP, 7 Erhuu St., Ulaanbaatar, PO Box

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# Blue Sky Bulletin



Issue #3, February 1998 Happy Tsagaan Sar! Internal Newsletter of UNDP's
Partnership for Progress in Mongolia

## Trust Fund gets in gear

The Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund (METF) is now legally established. The fund office has the financial support of UNDP and the Government of Mongolia. This fund aims to fund projects which would contribute to the conservation and permanent management of the land, its natural resources including the diverse ecosystem.

The first meeting of the board of directors of the METF was held the second week of January, where the President and the Vice-President of the METF were elected and the activities for 1998 were discussed. Dr. Z. Batjargal, ex-Minister for nature and the environment, and Mr. Douglas Gardner, Resident Coordinator of the UN, have been elected as the President and the Vice-President of the METF.

The board of directors consists of nine members including minister Tsagaan, minister Advasuren and others.

# Youth-21 Conference and Ecoforum draws over 170 delegates and creates wave of excitement

By David Sadoway, MAP-21 PIU

"Is it possible to balance ecological protection with economic growth? What is today's number one social issue in Mongolia for young people? What is your dream for the 21st century in Mongolia?" These questions challenged delegates at the first ever Youth Conference on sustainable development that took place this past February 4-7th at Ulaanbaatar's Youth Cultural Palace.

The Mongolian government declared 1998, "Year of Mongolian Youth" and this was the

first major event in line with the declaration "This open, interactive approach is new for Mongolia", s a i d Prime Minister Erkhankhan, delas

egates

Prime Minister Enkhsaihan is third of left

presented him with a listing of their priority problems, along with 15 pilot proposals.

Over 170 youth delegates from 21 aimags and members of the general public heard over 30 key speakers, including the President, Parliament Speaker, Prime Minister, UN Resident Coordinator and Minister of Nature and Environment.

Besides hearing speakers' ideas, attendees

were encouraged to take control of their future in a participatory exercise involving 15 brainstorming subgroups led by trained youth facilitators. Subgroups met to list the key social, ecological and economic issues facing the nation today. Many groups identified "education reform, poverty, air pollution and lack of jobs", as the number one issues affecting their lives.

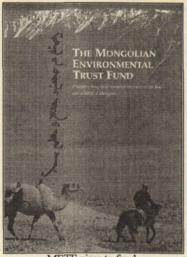
Groups were challenged to craft specific solutions and pilot projects to help resolve the

many problems. One group decided community toilets and public showers would help solve serious sewage and sanitary problems in Mongolia's ger communities.

Another group proposed a "chess board scheme for

combating desertification", in Bayanhongor aimag. Their approach would see eco-teams planting stabilizing vegetation. There was also a suggestion for a "Green Cities Programme". It envisioned pollution reduction, ecological restoration and job creation for unemployed youth.

(cont. on page 4)



METF aims to fund environmental projects

# Update on HIV/AIDS prevention activities

By Nicholas Bates, HIV/AIDS Health Adviser

As the issue still remains a hot one in Mongolia, different groups express their wish to being involved in these activities. Recently, two student groups approached the HIV/AIDS/STD project team wanting to conduct HIV activities. These groups are encouraged to amalgamate and form a student's AIDS Club, which was launched at the TOP-10 disco on Friday, January 16. Copies of the Mongolian AIDS Bulletin (a United Nations-funded magazine) were distributed at the launch as were lubricated condoms (kindly supplied by UNFPA).

Short speeches were made on AIDS prevention by the project team members and a game was played with patrons of the disco.

Similarly, other groups initiated interesting activities. For instance, a group of actors approached the project with the idea of

(cont. on page 2)

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#### News in a flash

By the beginning of February the UN agencies in Mongolia will have set up a working group on the activities of the year to support and to contribute to the activities already planned by the Government of Mongolia. In these activities UNICEF will take a leading role.

Already the UN has supported the Youth 21 conference in early February. Other plans include supporting young journalists.

UnDP's Blue Bag Project picked up kudos from Mongolian Environment Minister Mr. Adyasuran at a December exhibition. According to Ms. Davasuren, National Project Coordinator for UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programme (EPAP), Adyasuran "was really interested in the Blue Bag Project and is planning to visit the project and encourage all the people to be involved in such an activity." The Blue Bag Project helps women from poor households to organize small recycling businesses.

The comments were made at the exhibition marking the 10th anniversary of the Ministry of Nature and the Environment. Held at the National Museum, EPAP showed off its impressive range of awareness-raising materials - from brochures to calendars to cards and posters.

"The exhibition was visited by the Prime Minister, parliamentarians, government officials and schoolchildren," said Davasuren. "The exhibition played its role in helping to raise public awareness on the activities of the ministry and other environment projects. People learned a lot."

A group of local self-governance authority representatives from six aimags (Sukhbaatar, Khovd, Khuvsgul, Uvurkhangai, Tuv and Dundgovi), parliamentarians and other government officials visited Sweden at the beginning of February for a study tour under Capacity Building for Self Governance Project (SIDA, costshared by UNDP). The study tour co-funded by UNDP and the Government of Sweden looks forward to familiarize the local hural chairmen with the experience of communemanagement in Sweden.



# The UN Secretary General's letter to the President of Mongolia

On Human Rights Day, 10 December 1997, we launch a year in which the rights guaranteed to every member of our human family will be a central theme for the United Nations and the international community. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Five-year implementation Review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action from the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 challenge us to renew and strengthen our commitment to human rights.

The cause of human rights is at the core of the mission of the United Nations. I should like to call on you to support the global effort to reinvigorate the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, which has developed over the past 50 years. The endeavour of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to mainstream human rights into United Nations activities system-wide will be an important part of our contribution to the anniversary year.

Much remains to be done to ensure that the goals of the Universal Declaration are realized for every individual, but I am confident that the international community will respond to this challenge in a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity. We need greater efforts at the international and national levels to prevent conflicts, eradicate poverty, and empower people through human rights, democracy, and development.

I call on Governments to take appropriate measures to turn solemn commitments into concrete actions for the betterment of all people. I encourage Governments that have not done so to sign and ratify outstanding human rights treaties, and to develop national plans of action to promote greater respect for human rights. Let us complete universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and work with determination for universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the year 2000, as was called for by the World Conference.

Kofi A. Annan, UN Secretary General

# Mongolian NGOs give top marks to HDR

It has been over six months since the first Mongolian Human Development Report and work has started on the 1999 Report. That Report will be closer to an "action programme" according to Japanese human development expert, Professor Ryokichi Hirono. Hirono visited Ulaanbaatar on a whirlwind one-week tour early in February to gauge responses to the first report.

In a meeting between six Mongolian NGOs and Prof. Hirono, the Report received praise for doing what had never been done before: documenting the well-being of Mongolians from a human development perspective. Mr. Tuvshintogs, President of Mongolian Children Organization's Association, found the Report integrated the welfare of children very well. He would like to see the 1999 report more focused on the well-being of the family and tackle the thorny issue of herder children dropping out of school.

Ms. Gerelsuren, President of the Mongolian Women's Federation called the Report "a great contribution to human development in Mongolia" but wanted to see more detailed data on the state of women, including "what share of national wealth is held by women."

Prof. Hirono told the meeting the next report needs to present lessons learned in improving human development in Mongolia. Structurally, the 1999 report will be divided into two parts, with the first summarizing "events that have taken place in the last two years as well as the most pressing issues facing society. The second part will comprise information on the aimag level," he told local paper, The Mongol Messenger.

Prof. Hirono is the President of the Japan Society for International Development and the Chair of the Mongolian Development Policy Group of Japan. He teaches at Seikei University in Tokyo. He was instrumental in the development of the first global human development report and has visited Mongolia 25 times since 1990.

# (cont. from page 1)



#### **AIDS Activities**

developing short dramatic scenes showing how HIV is transmitted and the first performance was held at UFO disco, a meeting between the project team and the homosexual community in Ulaanbaatar, where the training needs of this community were ascertained.

The AIDS Foundation was launched on 23 January 1998. Several private sector and NGO organizations pledged money for the Foundation. For instance, the Mongolian Red Cross Society pledged Tg 1 million, the Olympics Committee Tg 1 million, the International Lions Club and its branch in Ulaanbaatar city pledged Tg 500,000 each. Mongolia Consulting Services donated condoms worth Tg 1 million, Tuv aimag Tg 100,000. Most impressive was the donation by miners of Shivee Gobi of a day's salary.

## In the field

#### The View from the Gobi desert

From a filipino development worker point of view

It takes six hours or so to reach the Middle Gobi, six hours or so without any green thing, bodies of water or significant landmark in sight. I wonder how the car driver was able to find his way to our destination under these conditions. There are no zigzag roads or uphill climbs either.

Along the way, I saw several big herds of sheep, cattle and horses and small herds of camels. I wonder how such big groups of animals can survive and even multiply with just dry grass and no water. They probably have adjusted genetically under this condition, or there must be something here which keeps them going.

Looking beyond what the bare eyes can see, the greatest resource that Mongolia possess is its people, the lifeblood of every nation's development. Put in the national vision of what they want to be and you have the heart to keep development going all over the land. One can see the potentials of the Mongolians from their intricate art works, their enthusiasm to acquire new knowledge and their eagerness to meet other people who can possibly share with them something new.

The vastness of the land overwhelmed me! This is not a surprising reaction from someone coming from a small country. Land is the second biggest resource of the country. The vast potential of Mongolia's land resource is still to be tapped to improve the quality of life of its people. The hostile climate can be tamed using appropriate technology, proper timing, selection of suited crop species and varieties and a little help from some friends from different parts of the world. With lots of sunshine the whole year round, Mongolia has huge agro-industrial potentials. The people just need to be exposed to other ideas and try what will work out for them and get the less-privileged country folks into the mainstream of economic growth.

I have also noticed that eco-tourism is a budding business in the countryside. Eco-tourism can provide additional sources of income to a great number of people. But the Mongolian authorities should legislate measures to regulate the negative effects of too much commercialization of tourism to the environment and to its people.

Likewise, Mongolians should be on guard against unbalanced industrialization so as not to sacrifice the resources which they have at present just for the sake of misconceived development. In any undertaking, people should always take into consideration what will happen in the future. We should give the next generations of Mongolians the legacy of enjoying fresh clean air and safe environment. The concept of lasting development is one, which can be passed on from one generation to another.

#### Up close and personal

Interview with Ms. Myagmarsuren, housekeeper, UNDP

When did you start working in UNDP? From 1996

Do you see any changes at the time you

started and now?
I got used to my
work. Feel more
confident.

What kind of person are you? I think, I am a friendly, honest person with good communication skills

What do you expect from people surrounding you?

I expect them to be friendly. Your background?

Bakery technologist.

Your family?
Married with a daughter.
Your hobby?

I like walking, going to the country and also doing my housework.

What is your favorite color? I like dark blue color.

Do you think you are happy? Why? Yes, I have a good family and job.

How do you see your future? I really want to learn a foreign language, specifically, English.

#### Read about the UN in Mongolia

More and more it is becoming crucial the various agencies of the United Nations cooperate in development activities. Every year the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) for Mongolia produces a report detailing the activities of the UN. The 1997 report highlights cooperation between the UN agencies and opportunities for future cooperation. Copies of the report are available from the RCO or the United Nations Information Shop at UNDP headquarters.

#### News in a flash

Under UNDP's MAP-21 Project, which aims to define a sustainable development strategy for Mongolia in the coming century, aimag action programmes are going to be approved in February this year. These aimag action programmes will be reflecting strategic plans for developing each aimag until 2020.

Ms. Chuluuntsetseg, MAP-21 Information manager said: "each aimag will develop its own action programme, reflecting and based on the specificities of each of them. This is the first time when aimags undertake such responsibility, when they are asked to look at the development from many angles: not only the economic side, but social and environmental sides as well. By adopting these action programmes, each aimag will define its direction in development."

Gachuurt settlement is located about 21 km from Ulaanbaatar. One of three small pilot projects under MAP-21 is being implemented there. With the funding of US \$30,000, the Urban Sustainable Agricultural Settlement Project is to upgrade the livelihoods of the inhabitants of the settlement by protecting the environment and creating jobs.

The site was visited by all environment project managers and coordinators. Under the pilot project a straw-bale house for office use and a green house were built. In the future, the project is going to recycle waste to produce fertilizer.

Under the Asia-Pacific Development Programme, a group of government officials will attend the information, communication and technology workshop to be held in Malaysia on 23-25 February.

The regional workshop on Values and Governance in Asia is a part of UNDP's ongoing work on governance in the Asia region.

The UNDP Reference Unit is moving and getting a new name - the United Nations Information Shop. Soon to be located in the former Polish Embassy building steps away from the UNDP office, its doors will open to the public at the end of February. The development collection will be expanded and the Shop will offer more magazines for readers. It will also distribute to users all UN publications produced for Mongolia and provide a free-of-charge Internet cafe.

#### "You have to taste everything for politeness"

Ms. Pie Meulenkamp, a newly-joined Danish JPO, had her first trip outside the capital recently. The joint UNDP and Poverty Alleviation Programme Office fact-finding trip was investigating opportunities for small project loans of US \$120 in Dornogovi and Dundgovi aimags. The loans are funded by the New Zealand government and are for poor femaleheaded households with children of preschool age. NGOs will be identified to help and supervise those women.

"This project is really to give a group of people a chance to change their situation from being hopeless to having some hope for the future," said Meulenkamp. "Hopefully, some of the women I met will benefit from this project and will have a better life than before the project. The trip allowed me to know better how tough it is. The soum is actually much bigger than I thought (five gers). I got familiar with some of the traditions and customs, like you have to taste everything for politeness."

(cont. from page 1)

Clearly many youth have problems with the present education system. "Khurd-2000" would see an introduction of social and ecological ethics into the education curriculum.



Other groups suggested less rigid, participatory education and intense training in order to combat poverty and unem-

ployment in the beleaguered aimags.

Many delegates said they wanted to duplicate the participatory approach used in their conference when they returned to their home aimags. Tsetsgee Puntsagiin, an event organizer said "writing project proposals or business plans is a good exercise for young Mongolians. Some will likely be implemented and we expect that future proposals will be more realistic."

Around 40 NGOs and private organizations also put together exhibits, posters and information displays to accompany the conference in the expo-style, Ecoforum. Information and condoms from the UN, a scarce commodity in many of the aimags, were scooped-up by energetic delegates.

#### Arrivals/Departures

Ms. N. Saruul joined UNDP from the Soros Foundation as Reference Unit Assistant and will be assisting with the new United Nations Information Shop; Ms. B. Bayarma, formerly of UNICEF, is now an NPO for the UNFPA programme; Ms. D. Sukhjargalma moved to UNDP from UNFPA as an NPO on the Poverty Alleviation Programme; Mr. Rogier Gruys joined the LAN team for a seven-month UNDP internal assignment as an Intranet project team leader, Canadian librarian Ms. Katherine Johnson joins the Press Institute of Mongolia as a UNV Documentalist; Mr. Ajamdar Rai, UNV, heading to Darkhan-Uul aimag as Family Farming Specialist; Mr. Atsushi Yamanaka, a Japanese JPO, Junior Programme Officer will work with the LAN team.



# UNDP projects explained in new guide

A new guide to UNDP programmes and projects will be out in February. The Guide contains brief introductory information on all UNDP-funded projects in the areas of poverty alleviation, environment and governance.

The Guide is available both in English and in Mongolian. Besides detailing all UNDP projects, the guide also provides useful information on Mongolia and contact names and numbers. The information will also be mirrored on the United Nations Homepage at www.un-mongolia.mn.

#### Common Database on social statistics

By Kassahun D. Mekuria, UNV

Considering the advantage that will result by synchronizing the effort in data collection activities in Mongolia, and also considering the need for consistency and integrity in data collection activities, the office of the Resident Coordinator is in the process of creating a task force for establishing a common database for the United Nations System in the country. Apart from the need for integrating the effort in searching and standardizing objective data, a common database is now becoming a prerequisite for the general trend in developing a single development assistance framework. Among others, the main objective of the recent trend in developing a single framework is to strengthen and/or create a more effective cooperation among the UN system, opening a new era for a more integrated response to the countries need. The process leads to an establishment of a single United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The process of preparing the UNDAF will commence with the preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), a joint needs assessment tool. The CCA is a common set of indicators at the country level that would form a basis for planning and programming activity and create a common information base for the activities of the UN funds and programmes.

#### Coffee and economy

Under UNDP's Think Tank Project, an Economic Club was established at the beginning of February. The main objective of the club is to study and identify the issues of Mongolian national development policy and strategy, and furthermore to provide the Government of Mongolia with professional support in formulating national economic policy. Mr. Tserendorj, National Project Coordinator, noted that "the economic club is designed in the way that different level people - decision-makers, politicians, journalists, economists - can share their ideas and debate development issues. This is, in my opinion, a timely event to direct and guide the development of the country to the same direction. The first debate will take place in February." The club consists of a chairman (Minister of Finance, Mr. Tsagaan), vice-chairman (Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister), 26 members and honorary members, including the President, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister, UN Resident Coordinator and others.

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words.

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Blue Sky Bulletin

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# Blue Sky Bulletin



Issue #4, March 1998 Happy Women's Day! Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia

# NGOs Play Large Role in Poverty Alleviation

"The evaluation seminar of 14 NGOs in 7 aimags and 7 NGOs in Ulaanbaatar at the end of January was a great opportunity for these NGOs enjoy their success and learn lessons from each other," Mrs. Christine Musisi, gender specialist, replied. This was the first time when this many NGOs became involved in poverty alleviation activities at their local level.

UNDP's Women's Development Fund allocated US\$ 100,000 for funding poverty alleviation activities facilitated by these NGOs. At the seminar, NGOs expressed that their involvement in poverty alleviation activities was beneficial to all sides.

Giving credit to the poor and expecting that they utilize the funds successfully is not realistic. They definitely need support in capacity building, access to information, to market and raise their confidence in utilizing the funds efficiently. In this sense, involvement of NGOs and community-based volunteers is important. Participants of such projects increase knowledge and skills. Not only do these projects provide a source of income, but they also enable people to send their children to schools, pay for their health insurance and taxes and build sense of confidence in the community. There were cases when beneficiaries became members of NGOs and volunteers.

There are 172 projects facilitated or implemented by NGOs. The NGOs benefit as well as the participants. Their capacity improves, they get more experience in poverty alleviation, gain more advising role. With the active role of NGOs in poverty alleviation, the trust of the community and the government in the NGOs rises.

At the seminar the NGOs not only enjoyed their success, but also identified their needs and problems they face. In the future, if the NGOs operate together, their impact would be stronger.

The seminar proved that the involvement of the civil society is very important in alleviating poverty in Mongolia. Community-based NGOs are the ones who are closer to the community and can find common language with the poor, leading them in the right direction. There is a need to increase involvement of NGOs in these activities.

# UN System working together with Mongolia on historic youth agreement

By David Sadoway, OIKOS Consultant

"For the first time ever the UN in Mongolia is being asked to coordinate and focus its youth activities in three areas: employment, education and health"

Government of Mongolia has declared 1998 "The Year of Youth" has backed up its words with a 150 million Tugrugs (184 thousand USD) commitment and a concrete Youth Action Strategy plus activities.

take advantage of the recent Government and NGO consensus on the importance of youth-related issues, the United Nations will sign a first ever agreement on youth with Mongolia's Government. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being crafted and drafted during an intense, month-long process of UN agency, ministerial, NGO and youth consultation. The final MOU document will be ready

for signing by both parties, Government and United Nations, in the first week of April this

Surveys show that young Mongolians have many worries. These range from poverty, finding a good job and educa-

tion, to alco-During group discussions at Youth-21 forum holism and family violence. More recent cerns include HIV and AIDS issues, the price schooling and pollution issues. Many creative solutions have been developed by youth themselves.

the Government, NGO community and the United Nations. But coordination and information sharing has been difficult and there has been little incentive for organizations to cooperate.

The desire to produce an MOU sprouts from urgent needs to save time, money and effort, to make youth programmmes more efficient and effective. "We sometimes walk

(cont. on page 3)



Microcredit helps to combat poverty

## Small projects awarded

UNDP-funded Environmental Public Awareness project received an award of US\$2,000 from TACIS programme for the best small projects. EPAP started its implementation in October 1996 and is to finish this year. At present there are 74 small projects facilitated by NGOs with US\$ 1,500 – US\$ 3,000. The award will be given to those projects, which are implemented successfully and likely to carry on.

## Microbusiness development

UNDP's US\$1 mln is to kick off the microfinance experience in Mongolia for the first time. The project, signed in June 1997, is underway with the executing agency ACDI/VOCA, a US microfinance consulting firm. Workplan design mission of the international technical service provider completed drafting the implementation strategy. The strategy is to be finalized upon comments by the Government and UNDP. By May 1998 project activities will start. The Government of Mongolia is very keen in seeing the results of the project as it addresses microbusiness development and savings in the transition period.

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Blue Sky Bulletin

#### News in a flash

Women Scientists in North-East Asia are to get support of US\$500,000 from UNDP for the period of two years. The "Gender Equality through Science and Technology Regional Cooperation in North-East Asia" project is the first gender and development project to build upon the cooperation of governments, institutions and scientists in Mongolia, South Korea and China. While improving women's participation in eradication of poverty, improvement of health and access to science and technology, it focuses also on promotion of women scientists for gender equality in the access of skills, resources, opportunities and decisionmaking. The project will start its implementation in March of this year.

North Korea joins the sub-regional project on HIV/AIDS. UNDP has initiated a sub-regional "Support to the Development of an Effective Prevention Strategy for HIV in the Countries in North-East Asia", project beneficiaries of which were Mongolia, South Korea and China. According to the latest news North Korea also expressed its interest to join the project. The first project development sub-regional meeting took place in October 1997. The US\$ 494,000 UNDP-funded project, the focal point of which is Mongolia, is to start in March 1998.

Activities of the project will centre around three thematic areas of focus: enhancing government support for more extensive and comprehensive multi-sectoral responses, supporting groups of people most vulnerable to the immediate impact of HIV infection and enhancing general community awareness.

Pre-school education is to benefit from a 3-year project of US\$ 1.5 mil. The project has been signed recently and starts its implementation with the UNESCO mission to Mongolia to launch the project. Cost-shared by the Government of Netherlands and Save the Children Fund, the project is aimed to help the pre-school education institutions and poor households. Channeled through the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office, the fund is to cover costs related to kindergarten repairs, establishment of ger kindergartens and community kindergartens and training of community education volunteers and toy production.

## Mongolia catching up in the computer craze

It has not been long since computers and Internet network were introduced to Mongolia. Computer technology is developing so fast

that every day we hear of more complicated versions and have to work hard to catch up with the rest of the world. Both UNDP and the Government of Mongolia are making much efforts to do so.

> Bvthe Decree

of the Prime Minister of Mongolia, a working group for the preparation of the proposal for the Government policy on Satellite communication and Internet, led by the Foreign policy advisor to the Prime Minister Mr. Badral, was established on 20 November 1997. The working group is to conduct a nation-wide survey on current situation on computer supply and Internet services, formulate policy outlines for Internet, identify social and economic impacts of the Internet and study the use of information by different social groups.

The

national sum-

mit on Infor-

mation, Com-

munication

and Technol-

ogy will be

held in May

this year. For

the prepara-

tion purposes

and formula-

tion of the in-

formation

strategy

For the first time the UNDP country office in Mongolia was able to connect to the Global UNDP Staff Forum held at the end of February 1998 between the UN Headquarters and country offices. Eventhough there is 12 hour difference between New York and Ulaanbaatar, the Internet allowed the office to watch the Global Staff Forum live online. The fourth Global Staff Forum connected via two-way video, two-way audio and Internet video was truly country-office oriented. It discussed national staff career policies. Starting on 19 February at 10:00 am New York time (11:00 pm Ulaanbaatar time) it allowed the country offices to share the ideas with the HQs on different issues concerning human resource management, programme delivery, information technology, etc until 1:00 pm (2:00 am). Using the Direct PC application with the assistance of Internet Service Provider (Datacom Co. Ltd) we had one of the fastest downloading speed of 450 kb in the world.

members of the working group heading to Kuala-Lumpur to take part in the regional seminar on Information Technology for Sustainable Development on 23-25 March 1998. The objective of the seminar, organized by the UNDP's Asia Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), is to provide the participants with an introduction to the benefits of Information Technology for support of a wide

# Mongolia is not in lack of food By A. Delgerma, reporter

According to the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) report of in October 1997, Mongolia is in a very hard situation of 90,000

tonnes of shortfall in cereal supand ply 23,000 tonnes should take the form of emergency food aid and one fourth of the Mongolian children is under chronic malnutrition by the study of the World Vision.

But Mr. Ajmal M Oureshi, the FAO representative China and Mongolia is very optimistic. On

hisa-week visit to Mongolia in February he consulted with the government of Mongolia the 1998-2000 activity of FAO. "If you look at the economic results achieved in 1997, they are very impressive. Mongolia is able to in-

crease its grain production and it has controlled inflation, reducing it to 17 percent, which is a great achievement. As well, Mongolia's GDP has grown considerably. Government policy in the agricultural sector is very prag-

range of development activities.

matic and impressive and fits very well in FAO special programme on food security." FAO is assisting on GDP projects on germ-plasma, food security and technical nomic accounting under the technical cooperation programme on food security. The two sub-regional projects involve sharing experience of other countries in agricultural and forestry projects.

"The state of food and agriculture of Mongolia is very strong. Mongolians are very hard working. Scientific and human resource expertise is very



The FAO representative to Mongolia, Mr. Qureshi presented his credentials to the President of Mongolia in February this year. Mongolia has been the member-country of FAO

since 1974. At present time, 3 FAO-funded are being imple-

mented with the UNDP's administrative and technical sup-

port. "By having a representative, our country would benefit

more in the field of agriculture and food. At least 5 projects

each year will be implemented," said Mr. Batkhuyag, Programme Assistant of UNDP. "The Mongolian Government

presented about 10 pipeline project proposals to Mr. Qureshi."

impressive. FAO is attentive to all proposals of the government and is supporting Green revolution very much. Within the projects' framework FAO will help the government in meeting its objectives."

Blue Sky Bulletin

# Rehabilitating the gobi

by Ch. Chuluuntsetseg, MAP-21 Programme Manager

Under the MAP-21 programme a small project called "Rehabilitation" has been implemented in Umnugobi aimag since July 1997.

The project aims to rehabilitate and protect the gene pool of herbs and fodder crops, annual and perennial plants and water sources. As well the reproduction of vegetable seed, studying the possibilities of improving productivity of soil through fertilizing and disseminating methods of planting vegetable in gobi area are also the objectives of the project.

Under this project, in 1997, about 5,000 trees of 1-5 meters long were planted. The seedlings of elm, aspen and almond were prepared and supplied the aimag centre and other soums with about 200 seedlings. Also, the project has grown annual and perennial animal fodder and distributed 10 tonnes of grass to about 10 herders in Bulgan and Khankhongor soums for fodder. 11 tonnes of potato and vegetable was grown and supplied for consumption of the locals.

Besides building a locally-adaptable seed reserve of cucumber, tomato, cabbage, turnip, onion, water-melon and sun-flower, the project also trained 170 persons interested in growing vegetables.

The family of Baraaduz is very keen on expanding the activity further. In 1998 the family is looking forward to planting bush and treesin at least 10 passes in Govigurvansaikhan mountain and supply seeds on order. The project will also set up a vegetable preservation shop and publish guidelines and brochures on how to grow vegetable in gobi area.

(cont. from page 1)

down the same road having the same destination in mind. It is best to work together if we are going in the same direction," explains Ya. Tumurbaatar, Director of the Department of Youth, Women and Family Affairs in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, a key ministry for youth issues in Mongolia.

The point of the MOU writing exercise is not to just create words on paper, but rather it seeks to obtain a commitment and understanding on youth-related issues in Mongolia.

Cooperation also makes for more creative and effective youth activities and projects. For the first time ever the United Nations in Mongolia is being involved to coordinate and focus its own youth programming and finances in three key areas: employment, education and health. In turn the Mongolian Government will undertake the same exercise within key ministries.

Building on tangible successes of the past, the Memorandum of Understanding on Youth hopes to provide a framework for meeting young Mongolians' needs today and into the next millenium.

For more Information:

- United Nations Resident Coordinator, Jerry van Mourik, telephone 00-976-1-321539, fax 00-976-1-326221, email: mourik@undp.org.mn.
- OIKOS Consultants, David Sadoway, telephone 00-976-1-450034, fax 00-976-1-326221, email d sadoway@hotmail.com.

### News in a flash

TNDP's Disaster Preparedness project will benefit from the American Military Civil Affairs Battalion. The Battalion made a mission to Mongolia in February with the objective of reviewing and updating disaster preparedness planning survey on Mongolia, which was carried out in March 1997, and identifying proper NGOs in Mongolia in the field of humanitarian assistance.

UNDP will be channeling requests of the NGOs to the Battalion through the Embassy of the USA.

Tongolia, China and Republic of Korea combine their efforts on combating poverty in the sub-region. For the purpose, UNDP is allocating US\$ 400,000 for the sub-regional project, where Mongolia is a focal point. The project is at the stage of developing the project document. The first workshop on the project will take place in spring this

In mid-March the Reproductive health "Fee for Services Clinic" opened its doors to Mongolian patients. Initiated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, UNFPA and Marie Stopes International, the clinic will be providing all sorts of services and treatments related to reproductive health such as preand post-natal treatments, STDs, etc. The objective of the clinic is to develop a model clinic, which will yield lessons for the private and public sector in terms of quality-of-care, efficiency and impact that a small-scale clinic can have. All costs related to the clinic are to be covered by the Dutch government for the period of 5 years.

he UNDP Reference Unit is moving and getting a new name - the United Nations Information Shop. Soon to be located in the former Polish Embassy building steps away from the UNDP office, its doors will open to the public soon. The development collection will be expanded and the Shop will offer more magazines for readers. It will also distribute to users all UN publications produced for Mongolia and provide a free-of-charge Internet café.



## Up close and personal

Exclusive interview with the Personnel Assistant Mr. B. Lhasuren

How long have you been with the UN?

For 4 years now.

What do you like and dislike about working here?

What I like most is that the organization functions upfront on the global arena. I was, as all of us were, thrilled and proud of the Secretary General's decisive actions against critical situation in Iraq. I think this was a significant step forward in the overall operation of the organization. I dislike this never-ending hecticism.

Are you a hard-working person? What kind of the person are you?

I' m a persistent guy, who is trying to cope with my portfolio on time and to have his job under the control. People say I'm hard-working, but I don't think I am.

What do you like doing in your leasure time? Working in the UN barely anyone has time for a hobby. If I have time I like reading detective stories. My favourite writer is John Grisham. I liked him after reading his "Firm".

What specifically you like in his stories?

They are the kind of books that you can not put away until you finish it. It really holds you with those intrigues, dealings with FBI and maphia structures and the ways and manoeuvres these intrigues are revealed.

What are your future plans in your professional life?

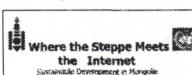
For the person like me in this position, chances for developing myself, beyond certain extent, and career are limited. What I foresee accomplishing in the nearer future is studying for a degree to enable myself to work in more substantive and creative field. My slogan is "to do more, to see more and to be

Many people are interested in working with the UN. Asa

Personnel assistant, could you share with our readers your thoughts on the qualities (both professional and personal) people should have in order to be chosen to work in the UN?

The major thing is, of course, strong educational background. Then, the person displaying energetic, dynamic qualities, I would say has better chances. Having initiative and being able to find solutions to problems independently are also in-count.

Do you have anything else to share with our readers? I think, from the Operations side, in order to provide speedy and efficient services to our customers like donors, our government counterparts, we should be a bit more flexible with our rules and regulations and less dependent from the Headquarters.



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## **Upcoming events**

1. Workshop on the "Gender and poverty" under the Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation. The issues to be put forward are present gender situation in Mongolia, especially at the grassroots level and de fine further direction of activities on gen der and poverty alleviation. A study tour in the gobi aimags will be conducted to evaluate the situation at the local level and define the goals.

2. Since April small projects under the UNDP's HIV\AIDS project start implementation. Total amount of funding for these projects are US\$20,000. The small projects to be facilitated by NGOs will be directed to preventive and protective activities.

lues.

# Coffee and economy continued ...

UNDP's Think Tank project brought together around 40 government officials, parliamentarians, private sector representatives and academicians for the debate on economic issues. The first debate which took place in the beginning of February in Chinggis Khan hotel discussed key issues of economic development and analyzed the recommendations drawn by Harvard Institute experts on the economic development of Mongolia. The presentations were made by Mr. Da.

# UNV becomes an honorary member of the MFDJA

The Press Institute of Mongolia for its 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary has awarded journalists for their journalistic excellence. Among the winners Mr. Mustapha Eric, UNV was noted for his significant contribution to the development of foreign relations of the PIM and received an award of honorary membership of the Mongolian Free Democratic Journalists Association.

Since the PIM was established the achievements and contributions it made to strengthening democracy in the country are great. Established with the project of DANIDA it pro-

vides a real and neutral support to journalists of Mongolia.

Since 1996 UNDP has supported the PIM through projects worth upwards of US\$ 2 mln. UNDP support the establishment of 6 regional training centres for journalists, with Internet links and e-mail and support training courses on basic journalism skills.



Ganbold, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic Policy and Mr. R. Amarjargal, MP.

The "Economic Club" is named not only to welcome the top economists, but everyone who is interested in contributing to the further development of the country," noted Finance Minister Tsagaan in his speech opening the club. The Club would play an important role in directing and guiding the development of the country, helping to form a united vision for Mongolian business. As well it will help to provide the Government of Mongolia with professional support in formulating na-

tional economic policy.

"Economic and social development are the two sides of the coin, they can not be parted from each other," said Mr. Gardner, Resident Representative of UNDP, wishing a great success for further debate in the club for the well-being of Mongolia.

The Club will meet fortnightly and in May a national summit will be organized. The second session of the Club is scheduled in March with Minister Tsagaan's presentation on the Role of the State in market economy and social development.

In the process of building a strawbale building for women centre in Amgalan, Ulaanbaatar

# Strawbale buildings - the wave of the future

Energy-efficiency stands as one of the top-priority issues in Mongolia as the country is in the high rates of green house gas per person in the world. According to statistics, every person in Mongolia breathes 90 kg of GHG each year.

UNDP's Provision of Energy Efficient Social Services project is to help to reduce this figure. The strawbale house is one of the activities of the project. Strawbale houses save 90% of the coal used by ordinary constructions. More and more government and private organizations have become interested in the construction of such buildings. At present, requests for 120 strawbale buildings came to the project.

Concerning the increasing request from different organizations in mid-February this year, the second workshop on building strawbale contructions was held at the Ministry of Nature and the Environment. 101 people from 9 aimags and the city companies participated. At the workshop participants were interested to cooperate with the project, eager to learn the strawbale building technology and teach others about this technique.

The building captures the interests of both the Government and international donors to invest into such buildings. Tuv aimag Governor Mr. Batbold is allocating Tg 83 mln for the building of about 20 strawbale buildings. The Government of Canada is donating more than US\$ 30,000 for the purpose. On this occasion, the Canadian Ambassador Mr. Balloch and UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Douglas Gardner signed an agreement on 10 February 1998 in the strawbale health clinic in biocombinat. The fund is to be utilized to build a strawbale kindergarten in the Chingeltei district of Ulaanbaatar and a strawbale health clinic in Bayanhangai.

## Arrivals/Departures:

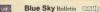
UN dispensary doctor Patricia and her husband Leo Zelkowitz, UNV at the TB centre left the country after a year assignment. Mr. Aung Kyaw Myint, UNV from Myanmar is arriving to replace the UN dispensary doctor; Mr. Choi Kwang-Koo, Korean UNV joined the UNV office as the programme officer; Mr. Kikutani, Japanese UNV finished his assignment as a coordinator for rural business promotion.

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words.

The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is the 18<sup>th</sup> of every month. Allsubmissions must be sent to B. Zoltuya, Information assistant, c/o Elbegzaya, UNDP, 7 Erkhuu street,

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Die Sky below

#### -Green revolution

#### News in a flash

The UN system is working collectively to make 1998 a high profile year at the time of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. While the promotion and protection of civil and political rights are doing well, there are major human rights breakdowns with the growth in poverty, increasing gender dis-parities and more street children.

A framework is being formulated to: (i) ground the conceptual grasp and the policy coverage of development as a human right and poverty as a human rights abuse; and (ii) outline how current UN-sponsored activities support national efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights in a broad development perspective. The final document should serve as a basis for a Memorandum of Understanding between the UN system and the Government of Mongolia.

On the occasion of the Foreign Inverstors Forum in Agro-Industry and Tourism, which was held between June 24-26 in Ulaanbaatar, CNN has been broadcasting a 30 second long advertisement about Mongolia. The advertisement about Mongolia on CNN channel will be covered 23 times till 5 June 1998.

Ministry of External Relations of Mon golia has sent a note to diplomatic missions and international organizations in Ulaanbaatar informing that HIV and Sexual Transmitted Disease test results are not compulsory for the foreigners, who applied for short/long-term registration and extension of visas.

JNDP has signed with the Government of Mongolia a US \$2.6 million project to smooth the transition to a market economy. The project will provide national and international technical assistance to 10 newly privatised companies. These companies will be selected based on detailed criteria related to economic, social and environmental concerns. The project is intended to create a more dynamic private sector in Mongolia by reforming the operations of firms, introducing modern management techniques, developing models and methodologies for future enterprise reform and training staff. Despite the rapid introduction of market reforms, many private enterprises suffer from inexperience with the market economy. The end result is that these inefficiencies continue to contribute to low production and high unemployment; two consequences of transition that the project hopes to remedy. Funds for the "Enterprise Restructuring" project are being generously provided on a cost-sharing basis with the Government of the Netherlands.

black market seems to be taking place Awith old copies of the Mongolian Human Development Report. Into its second printing in both English and Mongolian, 10,000 copies of the 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report were distributed across the country last year. The report still remains a hot item and has been spotted for sale (the Report is free) at the State Department Store for Tg 2,500 (US \$3.50).



The Mongolian Government is distributing seeds, garden implements and advice at one-stop centres like this one in UB.

# MicroStart project

At the request of the Government of Mongolia, Executing Agency of the project, the United Nations Development Programme has signed a contract with ACDI/VOCA, an American NGO. Technical Service Provider in order to perform consulting services under the MicroStart Pilot project in Mongolia. A Technical Service Provider is required to supply a wide range of services, including identifying potential grantees; pre-paring grant proposals for the local MicroStart approval committee; staff training and workshops; advising on how to establish a board of directors as well as resource mobilization strategies and coordinating impact assessment studies.

Microstart Pilot project 1997-2000 aims at building national capacity in microfinance for the purpose of promoting microenterprise development with strong linkage to development\poverty alleviation needs.

Main outputs: a national microfinance institution (MFI) providing technical service to other MFIs and loans to the beneficiaries; at least five local professional MFIs; 7.500 loans disbursed; 50 percent women beneficiaries by the end of the

## 15,900 trees were planted in Ulaanbaatar in one day

It was an environmentally-friendly invasion: 15,900 trees and 13,900 bushes were planted in Ulaanbaatar on Saturday 23 May 1998 in the framework of the Government's "Green Revoluprogramme. Parliament Speaker R.Gonchigdorj and Prime Minister Ts. Elbegdorj planted trees in the "Mother Complex" near the First Maternity Home. As well officials from the Health and Social Welfare Ministry and the Governor's Office of the Capital city, and students of the National Pedagogical University planted more than 160 trees such as larches, spruces and birches there.

The Governors office of the Chingeltei district of the Capital city plans to establish its own park and planted more than 130 trees in an 800 square meter field.

It was planned to spend more than Tg 2.7 million (US \$3,.300) to create green areas and restore them in more than 40 fields of the capital city. Along with other donor agencies and NGOs, UNDP is supporting the Government with seeds and gardening advice.

## Calendar

June 30 - July 2
"Democracy and Social Development in Mongolia" National Conference

- Poverty Alleviation Initiatives' North East Asian Sub-regional project formulation workshop is planned to be held in UB in July/
- August Within the project of Capacity building for Poverty Alleviation. NSO will organise this summer a Comprehensive Survey on Human Development (Living Standard Survey), the second of its kind in Mongolia (the first was in 1995 together with World Bank)
- UNDP contest on combating desertification and the effects of drought will close Sept. I, with the awarding ceremony on Oct. 17

  October 14-16
  Intergovernmental Meeting on Tumen

River Project will be held in Ulaanbaatar

# New social policy framework

The United Nations system is working with the Government, Asian Development bank (AsDB), World Bank/IMF, NGOs and others in support of the development of new national social policy framework that upholds sustainable human development paradigms and is consistent with the nation's ongoing political and economic reforms. The inputs from UNDP on this review of social policy options will support national and international consultants, various workshops and training. An important and closely related exercise of the AsDB is to prepare technical assistance for poverty reduction - and social safety net strengthening will take place at the same time as the UNDP exercise. The UNDP-supported re-view of social policy options will have two phases and two related outputs: 1. Phase 1: Report on a.) the existing situation and b.) social policy op-

tions and recommendations.

At the invitation of UNDP Mongolia, Dr. Ryokichi Hirono, a well-known economist and respected in Mongolia for his long association with the Government, the UN system, the private sector and NGO/heads the team. Work began in February of 1998 on the initial steps in assisting the Government to define policy options for a new national social policy framework. The input from Dr. Hirono as a result of his February work in Mongolia, provides a logical framework for the next step in the process and constitutes the foundation for this exercise.

The review exercise will be conducted in two phases related to the social policy options and secondly to the national social policy framework. A development economist and one of the founders of the global human development report, Dr. Hirono led the mission and the team members, including experts in social policy analysis with specializations in the fields of social services, employment and social protection. The mission was coordinated under the Prime Minister's office and worked closely with the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, Education and Environment. It will receive periodic input from the Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Growth Think Tank and PAPO.

The papers produced by the mission will be submitted to UNDP Mongolia and the UN Execu-tive Agency under SPPD in hard and soft copies as well as in English and Mongolian.

The mission will be working in the period from 4 May-September 1998.

Blue Sky Bulletin

# Urban poverty continues to rise



Hunger and malnutrition are pressing issues for Mongolia during the transition. These children receive three meals a week – for some the only food they can get – at a soup kitchen in the northeast of the capital, Ulaanbaatar. Many of the residents can't receive social services because they do not have permission to live in the capital. According to the government's own figures, the number of poor in the capital grew by 30,000 in 1997.

despite Tg 150 million being spent on poverty alleviation. By the end of 1997, 117,860 persons of 26,186 Ulaanbaatar households were living in conditions below level of the minimum subsistence level (MSL), according to the Capital City Statistics Service. By level of indigence, Nalaihk is leading among the Capital city districts with 55.7 percent of its residents living under MSL. The MSL is set at Tg 10,400 per person per month. Compared to 1996, the number of beggars was up by 51.8 per cent, and the level of indigence rose 6 per cent

reaching 18.5 per cent. Poverty has increased 150 per cent since 1994.

The United Nations is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mongolian Government on Food Security and Nutrition, two issues singled out in the 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report that threaten the health of future generations. The MOU will help to focus efforts to address the nutrition and food needs of Mongolians.

# Hot talk on new hotline

The red phone rings every minute or so and is quickly answered by a medical student surrounded by safe sex posters. Tucked away in a cramped office in downtown Ulaanbaatar is a new phenomenon for Mongolia: the telephone advice hotline. In operation since March of this year, the Adolescent Youth Hotline has received close to 400 phone calls from Mongolians seeking the latest information on sex and sexuality.

The calls can range from skin problems to depression to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. In one call, a cleaner was worried she could contract HIV from cleaning toilets. Four callers have wanted to commit suicide. The most common call relates to birth control and how to avoid pregnancy.

while the main target for the hotline is youth - 70 per cent are secondary school students - the counselors have received calls from all ages, including senior citizens and a seven-year-old boy.

Down the hall is a new walk-in clinic also established by the hotline's NGO, the Adolescent Futures Centre. The clinic provides free examinations and birth control like condoms.

The hotline operates from 8 am to 8pm seven days a week. Most calls are in the afternoon.

The telephone counsellors are medical students from UB's main medical school. For them working for the hotline has been an eye-opener. They receive two weeks of training before taking calls.

"I once got a call from a middle-aged man who wanted to know how to decide if he was homosexual. Homosexuality at first seemed strange but now that I have read about it, it is not so strange," says 21-year-old medical student Ms. Tumerbat. She has found most callers want a follow-up examination in the clinic.



Medical student Ms. Tumerbat talks straight on sex

The hotline was set-up by an NGO, the Adolescents Future Centre, with seed money of US \$4,500 from the United Nations. It was founded by a group of doctors, including Dr. Lkhasuren, director of the UB medical university, Dr. Altanchimeg, editor-in-chief of the Mongolian AIDS Bulletin and now with UNFPA, and gynecologist Dr. Ayush. The success of the hotline has attracted support from Ulaanbaatar's mayor, who has promised to provide additional funding.

UNAIDS, the United Nations agency to combat STDs/HIV/AIDS, has had an office based in Mongolia at the Medical University since the end of last year.

Hotline number is 312151

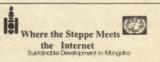
#### News in a flash

anadian State Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Raymond Chan, visited in late May an energy-efficient health clinic being funded on a cost-sharing basis by Canada and UNDP. The building is insulated using strawbales, an innovative building technique that gives the building extraordinary insulation. Buildings using strawbale technology have been shown to save up to 45 per cent of the budget of social services; precious funds that once went up the chimney in Mongolia's harsh continental climate. Mr. Chan's visit also included an hour-long meeting with the UNDP Resident Representative and four Canadians (including two United Nations Volunteers) working on UNDP projects. Canada has had relations with Mongolia since 1973, but only established an honourary consulate in February of this year. Mr. Chan expressed an interest in the food security situation in Mongolia and how Canada

This workshop was organized by the UNDP Poverty Alleviation team and conducted by Christine Musisi, UNV Gender in Development Specialist on 15 May 1998. The aim of the workshop was to introduce gender concept to UNDP staff, discuss the importance and share understanding of gender analysis, which provides a framework by which to compare the relative advantages and disadvantages faced by men and women in various sphere of life, such as the family, the workplace, the community and political system and prepare draft gender mainstreaming strategy document of the country Office based on the suggestions and proposals of group discussions of participants on the inclusion of gender issues in all projects, program activities. Issues on what is gender, gender relations, triple role of women in the society and practical and strategic gender needs were touched during the workshop.

K ofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations has sent a message to Mr. Tsahiagiin Elbegdorj., Prime Minister of Mongolia extending his congratulations and best wishes on the assumption of the office of Prime Minister of Mongolia. The UN Secretary General noted in his message that Mongolia was an active participant the United Nations' conferences of such important issues as social development, environment, children, gender and population. He stresses that the United Nations family stands to support Mongolian Government in any way possible in meeting the commitments that Mongolia has made at those conferences, as well as in achieving other mutual goals.

Mr. Amarjargal, Minister of Foreign Af fairs who participated in the meeting of Ministers of the World Trade Organisation held in Geneva, Switzerland met with Ms. M.Robinson, the UN Human Rights commissioner and signed a draft document on the establishment of Human Rights Centre in Mongolia with the support of the United Nations.



United Nations Homepage: www.un-mongolia.mn E-mail: dsouth@undp.org.jim

#### DALANZADGAD

# Development Profile: UNDP in the Southern Gobi Desert

Stories and photos by David South

In late May UNDP visited its environment and poverty projects in Omnogobi or South Gobi on the border with China and in the heart of the Gobi Desert. The aimag (province) is home to 45,000 people spread over a territory of 165,000 kilometers. It is a harsh environment where temperatures can plummet to minus 40 degrees Celsius in winter and shoot up to plus 40 in summer. What is striking about the capital of Omnogobi, Dalanzadgad, is how well things are working. It is a garden capital - despite being in the desert the central boulevard is covered in trees - and trade with China has brought a prosperity for some herdsmen, many of whom buzz around the town on Planeta motorcycles. The offices of the Malchin television company are hidden by a bouquet of white satellite dishes - it is not an uncommon sight to see a ger with a satellite dish in South Gobi.



Communities like Bulgan soum struggle to find economic opportunities in the Gobi

# Electricity in the air - 85 women discover the Women's Development Fund

The Mongolian Human Development Report singled out South Gobi for having the highest poverty incidence in Mongolia (41.9 per cent). While this ranking is hotly debated by locals who say it is a statistical anomaly resulting from their low population, there is no question life is hard in the Gobi.

In a crowded room in the Governor's building, 85 of the poorest women in Dalanzadgad have gathered to hear about an innovative UNDP-initiated fund. The meeting, organized by the NGO the Liberal Women's Brain Pool, is introducing the Women's Development Fund. Many questions are asked as to why some of the women were passed over when the local government started distributing poverty alleviation funds.

With the assistance of the British Government who donated Tg 12 million, these women are getting a chance. The Women's Development Fund was



85 of Dalanzadgad's poorest women learn about PAPO for the first time

founded in partnership with the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office to take account of the unique role women have in the prosperity of families. Support is key and the women will be assisted by community activists as they develop their project ideas and begin to implement them. In early June they started to receive funding for their projects.

# Gardens in the desert

Row after row of broken vodka bottles and pickling jars become miniature greenhouses, protecting fragile seedlings from wind and frost. A UNDP-supported project has helped to turn a piece of desert pasture land into an oasis rich in fruit, vegetables, herbs and trees. The experimental garden run by Mr. Baraduuz, author of books on gardening and a desert pioneer, is playing a key role in promoting sustainable livelihoods in the Gobi. His garden, one of several pilot projects across the country, was funded with Tg 3.9 million by UNDP under MAP-21 (Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st Century).

The garden serves several purposes, being used as a training school for local farmers, a seed/seedling bank and a repository for local herbs and trees. The trees play a key role in halting desertification - protecting soil from high winds and act as a shelter from dust storms for local residents. Baraduuz says the over 400 streams in the Gobi could support more gardening with the right planning.

"People in this province are not as aware of cultivation since it only started in the 60s," he says. "I have proven with this garden you can grow in the Gobi. The number of people interested in this is growing every year. More and more people are asking for seedlings."

Driving north and west of Dalanzadgad towards Bulgan soum there is a striking number of gardens in operation. Near Bulgan 40 families are working on a 4.5 hectare plot for the past five years. According to farmer Mr. Enkhbat, they sell their vegetables in Ulaanbaatar, growing nine varieties including turnips, potatoes and garlic. The plots are small but profitable he says and worth leaving his government job for. He proudly remarks they have received no loans or funds from any organization. The field is surrounded by trees to protect it from wind. It is farms like this that are benefiting from Baraduuz's garden and his knowledge.



Over 40 families work this plot of land north of Dalanzadgad



A thriving plantation of seabuckthorn berries proves the Gobi can grow



These children help on the farm in South Gobi

The ice melts in the Three Beauties Park

# Why is the ice melting?

The air is moist and cool. This may be the Gobi Desert and the hottest place in Mongolia, but it is hard to match this fact with what is before me: rich green grass and shrubbery fighting for space amongst the rocks. This is the Three Beauties mountain range - two million hectares of protected area - and home to many rare species in Mongolia, including snow leopards, lbex or wild goats, eagles and Gobi bear. Once frozen year-round, the river at "Vulture's Mouth" in the Three Beauties park just outside Dalanzadgad has melted earlier and earlier every vear. A must-see destination for the thousands of tourists who visit the park, the hikers have played their part in slowly eroding the ice. There are also other theories including global warming and those who use the ice to make vodka.

This phenomenon holds a special place in the hearts of the local people. UNDP is helping to preserve the frozen river in the valley through EPAP. The project is working on two fronts. In the winter they flood the river to help build up the layers of ice to return the river to its original thickness. During the tourist season they inform hikers about the necessity to tread lightly when visiting this Mongolian treasure.

# Traffic signs bring safety to the streets

Cars, mostly olive green Russian jeeps, weave in and out of the fivestorey apartment blocks of downtown Dalanzadgad. Running through the centre of the capital of Omnogobi is a gardened boulevard, where families hide from the hot sun under trees. That one road, and the few feeding into it, are the only enforced guides for drivers. It can be seen across Mongolia - settlements crisscrossed by drivers looking for the shortest route to their destination. It doesn't help that there are no natural or manmade barriers to prevent drivers going their own way.

In Dalanzadgad a UNDP project to protect the environment from offroad driving has had an unexpected outcome: it has galvanized the community to make the streets safer by adding over 100 traffic signs. The project "Soil and Road" under UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programme (EPAP), started modestly. According to project director and local Khural head Mr. Byambasuren, the number of vehicles in the area shot up from 800 three years ago to 1,500 today. Most of these vehicles drive off-road, kicking up dust and destroying flora which contributes to desertification.



"The disease rate here is very high because of the dust and we have many traffic accidents involving children," says Byambasuren.

With a small grant of Tg 2.5 million from EPAP the project was able to organize workshops for local drivers where they signed a contract to not drive off-road, facing stiff penalties from the traffic police if caught.

A media campaign was also organized and posters and brochures distributed. The local traffic police were so impressed by the project they decided to chip in a further Tg 2 million to construct traffic signs and install concrete traffic calming barriers.

At first they explored the possibility of buying ready-made signs but found the costs too prohibitive. "We wanted to get signs that glowed at night but they were too expensive. We decided to make our own out of old oil drums."

In a room thick with the smell of fresh paint sits the traffic signs. They all use internationally recognized symbols and only upon closer inspection do they reveal a past life sitting on top of an oil drum. Each sign costs Tg 2,000 to make. In addition to the signs traffic calming concrete barriers have been installed in 20 places throughout Dalanzadgad.

Next year Byambasuren will target the large ger districts that surround the centre of Dalanzadgad. He has a message for any driver who doesn't obey. "We will be banging on their heads with lectures if they break the rules!," he says with a laugh.

#### Environmental awareness:

# The media get the message out

By A. Delgermaa



The EPAP team: (from left) Davaasuren, Sumiya and Robert Ferguson

All the continents are masked in toxic black smoke, the rivers are polluted and full of garbage – these are the images that come to mind when Mongolian children think about the environment. It was all part of a series of paintings by children at the Eco-Olympiad sponsored by UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programmes with the Enlightenment (Education) Ministry.

Funded by UNDP, Netherlands and Australia, EPAP is calling back the Mongol tradition to protect nature which is under threat in this economic transition period. For some, environment takes a back seat to the pursuit of money.

EPAP has shown what can be done by mobilizing the media and the enthusiasm of NGOs and its savvy use of publicity is a model for other UNDP projects. The posters covering the EPAP office wall remind us the earth is exhaustible and we are not the only people living on it.

The two year programme has touched many people by working at the grassroots with NGOs since its inception in 1996.

About 60 small projects out of 90 have successfully finished, educating the public on how to relate with nature,

how to work with the environment and how to protect it. For instance Hatgal Women's Federation of Hovsgol aimag worked to increase public awareness of Hovsgol lake which is the pride of most Mongols - even today. The project worked with the local people who live on the shores of the lake.

"Environment issues are getting more important at the local level," says national programme officer Ms. D. Davaasuren. "We receive many proposals from NGOs and from MPs. Voters ask their representatives in government to take this issue seriously."

The media wing have chosen the most popular dailies - Ardyn Erkh and Onoodor - to encourage journalists to write about environmental issues. EPAP also works closely with the Environmental Journalist Club - a gathering of senior Mongolian journalists at the Press Institute of Mongolia. A journalist from Onoordor (Today) newspaper is currently working on a how-to educational booklet to distributed by radio and TV. TV and radio offer something newspapers can't in Mongolia a truly national audience. EPAP's funds will run out in August but they hope past success will help extend the pro-

# What works in HIV/AIDS education?

#### By A. Delgermaa

When the news first came out in the early 1990s that a Mongolian was HIV positive, fear and ignorance left many feeling he deserved death. But today there are two official cases of HIV and the Mongolian health minister recently ventured the number may be closer to 400.

It is still early days for anybody working in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention. What messages work and what don't is still up for debate. The government has tried scare tactics in past campaigns but it has also been remarkably open and experimental as well.

The UN AIDS programme in Mongolia is funding 11small projects by NGOs, carrying out prevention education among target groups to bridge the gap in ignorance.

Ulaanbaatar City's Women's Counsel conducts peer education campaigns with prostitutes in private hotels. The project distributes condoms, advice on how to convince their partners to use condoms.

"It is not easy to persuade their sex partners to use condoms. It takes a special approach." Ms. Kh.Enkhjargal, the national coordinator of for the UNDPfunded UNAIDS programme, notes the importance of special information to tarnet groups.

"Gal Golomt", is targetting businessmen who come to the capital's markets looking for business and prostitutes. Once a month on average they are on business in the city and use prostitutes. The project also educates on how to prevent STDs.

All the small projects have sepcific goals for their target groups.

"We are educating educators and opening up a once closed topic between use and the target groups," says Enkhiargal.

The other projects are carrying out prevention education among students and in domitories in UB, among street and homeless children in Darkhan, among military officers and solders.

As well behavior research of prostitutes and homosexuals, the medical treatment of STDs and advice will be handled by professional institutes within the projects' framework.

With knowledge and action, AIDS should not be a danger the project of-

## Blue Sky on Blue Sky

Every Tuesday at 5:10 pm UNDP's plucky newsletter joins forces with Blue Sky Radio (100.9 fm) in an hour of English language news and information for those who want to learn English. It's in-depth interviews with the people behind the projects and at the heart of today's hottest issues!

# Log on to Mongolia -Our homepage just got better!

The UN homepage for Mongolia now has a full-time editor, Ms. Bayasgalan. Since its humble launch in December of last year the homepage has seen many changes. The homepage offers information on all the UN agencies in Mongolia and has a wide audience, from students to academics to business people to development workers to Mongolians living abroad. We know they are thirsty for the latest information on Mongolia and they demand the best. Some of the changes include more up-to-date news, an online magazine and a Mongolian language verison of the site - more and more Mongolians get wired every day. Keep checking us out and telling us what you think!

http://www.un-mongolia.mn

## Arrivals/Departures

Ms. Ch. Nasantuya, NPO, took annual leave followed by Special Leave without Payment for a Masters degree in the USA; Ms. B. Elbegzaya, Secretary to DRR, left UNDP Mongolia to take her studies in USA to get Masters degree; Ms. L.Ariunaa, LAN Administrator, separated from UNDP Mongolia to join UNDP Project on information technology; Mr. Tserendorj, pre-viously NPC of UNDP Project, will start his work as NPO in Governance Programme of UNDP, starting from July 1; Ms. Bayasgalan joined UN Mongolia as UN Webmaster; UNVs Mr. Matthew Heller, Mr. Olaf Kanstein, Mr. Samarapala Vidanagamachchi, Mr. Mahinda Moragolle have all completed their assignments with the Democracy and Decentralization Project; UNV Ms. Christine Musisi has moved to Kyrgystan to become a consultant for that country's poverty projects; UNVEnglish teacher Mr. Stephanus Barnard, has returned to Bournemouth, England to teach foreign students.

# PRESIDENT AWARDS UNDP WORKERS WITH FRIENDSHIP MEDAL



A proud Christine Musisi

Ugandan-born United Nations Volunteer and gender specialist Christine Musisi received one of the highest honours bestowed upon a foreignor by the Mongolian Government: the Friendship (Nairamdal) Medal. Presented by President Bagabandi in a simple ceremony on May 22, the medal is a reflection of the deep affection and appreciation felt by Mongolians for Ms. Musisi's work.

Ms. Musisi has taken up a new assignment in Bishkek, Kyrgystan to continue her work with UNDP and will be a consultant to their poverty alleviation projects in that country. High lights of her two-year assignment in Mongolia included her stunning performance at last October's charity concert at the Cultural Palace in which Ms. Musisi, dressed in a gold del, charmed the audience with her own interpretation of traditional Mongolian ballads. Funds raised during the concert went to support a school for the children of the blind in Ulaanbaatar. She also contributed to the formulation of the Women's Development Fund of the Poverty Alleviation Programme.

UNDP consultant Paul Oqvist from the Governance and Economic Transition Team was also awarded the Nairamdal medal.

# **UN Information Shop Opens its Doors!**

The UN Info Shop has something for everyone

- an extensive Development Resource Centre with the latest reports and studies
- ☑ background archives on Mongolia
- ☑ development magazines and Mongolian newspapers
- ☑ Internet access (in late summer)
- ☑ a distribution point for all UN publications in the Mongolian language
- ☑ lots of UN posters and publications in many languages
- ☑ a photo and video library on development

If we don't have it we will try our best to find it!

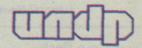
We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month (except this issue of course!). The next deadline for submissions is July 18.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are free!We can send the newsletter to you electronically, via e-mail, or by post. Just send us your address and how you would like to receivethe newsletter and we will rush it out straight away.

All submissions must be sent to the Communications Office, UNDP, 7 Erkhuu St., Ulaanbaatar, PO Box 49/207.
Telephone: (976-1) 321539.
Fax: (976-1) 326221.
E-mail: dsouth@undp.org.mn
Please check out the United Nations Homepage at http://www.un-mongolia.mn



# Blue Sky Bulletin



Issue #7, July 1998

Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia

# Youth Come First in New Agreement

On July 8 a historic agreement was signed between the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations to address the needs of youth. After extensive consultations throughout the first half of this year, the Memorandum of Understanding on Youth details how the UN is supporting the Government in the youth-related areas of employment, education, environment and health. The Government of Mongolia declared 1998 "The Year of Youth" and has backed up its words with a Tg 150 million (US \$184,000) commitment and a concrete Youth Action Strategy, including activities. The MOU is intended to take advantage of the recent Government and NGO consensus on the importance of youthrelated issue

related issues.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is the result of consultations with UN agencies with representations or project staff in Mongolia (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCHR, WHO, UNFPA, UNV, World Bank), government ministries, NGOs and youth organizations.

Surveys show that young Mongolians have many worries. These range from poverty, finding a good job and education, to alcoholism and family violence. More recent concerns include HIV/AIDS issues, the price of schooling and pollution issues. Many creative solutions have been developed by youth themselves, the Government, the NGO community and the United Nations. But coordination and information sharing has room for improvement.

The desire to produce an MOU sprouts from urgent needs to save time, money and effort, while making youth programme significantly more efficient and effective. "We sometimes walk down

while making youth programme significantly more efficient and effective. "We sometimes walk down the same road having the same destination in mind. It is best to work together if we are going in the same direction," explains Mr. Ya. Tumurbaatar, Director of the Department of Youth, Women and Family Affairs in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, a key ministry for youth issues in Mongolia.

The point of the MOU writing exercise is not to just create words on paper, but rather it seeks to obtain a commitment and understanding on youth-related issues in Mongolia. The challenge is

to bring life to the document.

Cooperation also makes for more creative and effective youth activities and projects. The United Nations country team in Mongolia is coordinating and focusing its own youth programming and finances in four key areas: employment, education, environment and health. In turn the Mongolian Government will undertake the same exercise within key ministries. Close coordination will be part of the implementation.

(cont. on page 4)

## Human Development Report Gets the Nod at Regional Conference

The 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report was the topic of discussion at a regional workshop in July. Held in Seoul, South Korea the workshop brought together participants from 22 countries in Asia-Pacific
– all currently working on National Human Development Reports (NHDR). Mongolia's Report was praised
at the workshop for its "simplicity, readability and presentation," according to the Ministry of Health's Mr. Chadraabal, a key researcher with the first report.

The workshop was intended to "share experiences and learn from each other," says workshop participant Ms. D Sukhjargalmaa,

Human Development Programme Officer with UNDP.

The Asia-Pacific National Human Development Report Workshop high-lighted the fact the "preparation of the NHDR varies from country to country," continues Sukhjargalmaa "The majority of par-ticipants acknowledged the Filipino experience as a good example. They established a Human Development Network, a non-governmental organization (NGO), with the involvement of politicians, development planners, researchers, government officials, experts and other NGOs." The meeting has come out with several recom-

mendations concerning the conceptual and analytical content of the NHDRs, ways to increase their impact and identifying avenues for regional cooperation on NHDRs.

The concept of human development has always been a bit of a conundrum and was still not very clear to some of the countries at the workshop. It was recommended that the concept be better explained, focusing on people-centered development in terminol-ogy custom-tailored to each culture and society, while

not diluting the universal character of human development. In order to ensure the linkage between the global and the national HDRs, it was discussed and recom-mended that the global HDR should avoid introducing new indices every year or modifying the earlier indi-ces. This causes problems in preparing the national

It hasn't even been a year since the September, 1997 launch of the first report, but work is already under way on the 1999 Mongolian HDR. "The 1997 MHDR was positively received by the general pub-

lic," continues Chadraabal. "We are working on the second one following the principles that this one should be better in terms of theme choice and research work. From the first Report we learnt the lesson that more research and writing was done than actually made it into the Report. The second one should be compact and of a high quality. The Ministerial Council approved the recommendations that came out from



Children drawings were widely used in MHDR

the meeting of about 40 researchers on the theme. This data will be updated and the theme for the 1999 HDR will be human development and government services.

Mr. Ochirbat from the Ministry of

Health and Social Welfare also joined the workshop.
The Government of Mongolia hopes to launch the second Mongolian Human Development Report in July



70 percent of Mongolia's population are young people under 25.

#### We are One World

In the course of 1998-1999, the UN system in cooperation with the Mongolian Government is looking forward to organizing the "One World Conference Series". In follow-up to the global summits of the 1990s tackling critical issues facing mankind, the UN agencies and the Government of Mongolia are spearheading six conferences to expose young people between the ages of 15-19 to development issues of local and global importance.

The tentative conference schedule is

as follows:	
Children	-Nov, 1998
Human Rights	- Dec, 1998
Population and Development	- Jan, 1999
Social Development	- Feb, 1999
Women and Development	-Apr, 1999
National Summit	-May, 1999

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#### News in a flash

NDP's Tumen River Area Development Regional Programme (TRADP) is going to hold the next intergovernmental meeting for the region in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on October 14-16, 1998. As part of the preparation work, the director of the Programme Mr. David Husband, visited the country recently. During his stay he met with policy- and decision-makers, development planners and donors. From the Government side, Mr. Amarjargal, Minister for Foreign Affairs was appointed to head the national working group on preparation for the upcoming meeting.

The regional Programme aims to develop the economy of the region through the development of infrastructure. The area is set to become one of the Asia-Pacific region's trade and investment hot spots. The member countries of the TRADP are China, Russia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Mongolia. The present Mongolian Government is giving priority to the programme according to Minister for Nature and the Environment, Mr. Bayartsogt. For landlocked countries like Mongolia it is essential to gain access to the sea for trade.

Under the project, four participants from Mongolia are going to attend the meeting on Tourism in Yanji, China. Mr. D. Rentsendorj (Ministry of Finance), Mr. E. Davaasuren (Ministry of Infrastucture Development), Mr. P. Haltar (Juulchin Company), Mr. Ch. Enhtaivan (Tsagaan Shonhor Company) are the members of the Working group on the development of tourism in Mongolia.

r. Robert Cater, representative of -American international technical service provider ACDI/VOCA, has commenced his duties. Under UNDP's Microstart Project he will be facilitating the introduction of microcredit - modest loans made to the poor - in Mongolia. To start he will be assembling a team, conducting a needs assessment in financial services and studying the microenterprise market in Mongolia.

This month UNDP's year-long project on Support to Coordination and Management of External Development Resources is going to be signed by UNDP and the Ministry of External Relations. With US\$270,000 funding from UNDP, the project implementation is foreseen to start in August. With the shifting of responsibility for the Aid Coordination Unit to the Ministry of External Relations, the Government's reform policy is intended to maximize official development assistance through effective coordination of external and internal development resources to ensure their impact on economic and social development. In line with this goal the project aims at making a contribution to the achievement of the Government's objective through its capacity for management and coordination of external resources.

The East Asian Women's Conference is to be held in Ulaanbaatar, capital city of Mongo lia, from the 23-26 August, 1998. As the follow-up to the second conference of 1996 in Seoul, the conference is being organized by the Mongolian Liberal Women's Brain Pool. an NGO, and will bring together women from China, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Mongolia. The women in the region are to discuss the issues related to the role of women in socio-economic development of the regional countries, while strategizing a joint position for settling problems facing them and designing ways for their settlement.

## **Eastern Steppes**

## **Development Profile: Bringing Opportunity While Protecting Biodiversity**

Text and photos by B. Zoltuya

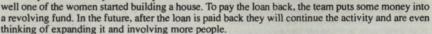
The Mongolian Action Programme for the 21x Century was recently adopted by the government of Mongolia. It is an example of the new thinking that is shaping development. In the new millennium development will not be narrowly defined as economic development, but rather the complex interplay of economics, environment, culture and society. The new Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project, which was signed on June 54's World Environment Day, reflects this new concept. Joining the July opening of the project in Dornod was both Minister for Nature and Environment Mr. S. Bayartsogt and UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Douglas Gardner. Both men were able to see first-hand poverty projects and the environmental condition of the Eastern aimags (Dornod, Sukhbaatar, Khentii).

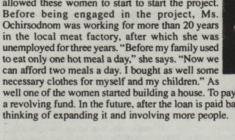


1. This maternity room in Choibalsan, Dornod aimag centre was established with Tg 386,000 from the Women's Development Fund, established by UNDP. In the aimag between 1,200-1,300 mothers give birth per year of which 50 per cent of these mothers really need both pre- and post-maternity care, which is often missed in soums. One of the women (with a child) in the picture is delivering for the third time. Already she has been in the hospital for three months. Being homeless, she has two other children, one of whom is in Ulaanbaatar. The hospital is taking measures to check her out soon so she can be with her relatives. Increases in the per bed/per night cost to Tg 4,000

means the maternity ward can now provide women with hot meals twice a day.

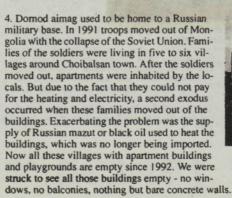
2. Ms. Ochirsodnom, 41, has three children and is a single mother. With five other single mothers she is running a project to turn livestock intestines into sausage casings or exporting salted strips to be used for medical sutures and parachutes. Tg 700,000 of the loan from the Women's Development Fund allowed these women to start to start the project. Before being engaged in the project, Ms. Ochirsodnom was working for more than 20 years necessary clothes for myself and my children." As







3. The Aduunchuluun mine in Dornod is working to its full capacity of extracting 300,000 tonnes of coal for local needs. It has a reserve of 240 million tonnes of coal. In order to mine coal the first 30 m of the soil must be removed. For the protection of the environment the mine put the discarded soil in a field. This year about Tg 1 million is allocated for the renewal of the environment. With this money they are going to plant perennial plants and fruit bushes. In Khentii and Dornod aimags about 80 enterprises conduct mining.





# **Driven to Drink in Mongolia**

In June UNDP Mongolia hosted a visit of journalists to see our projects in Ulaanbaatar and the Gobi Desert. This story is just one amongst many that resulted from that trip.

Aid agencies say the transition from communism to market economy has hit Mongolia so hard that some men have been driven to drink and some women to despair. The BBC's Charu Shahane thought it was a stereotype worth investigating.

Sitting in a traditional Mongolian home outside the capital Ulaanbaatar - a felt tent called a ger and sipping sweet milk - we were to be embarrased by our assumptions.

"This", said our Mongolian friend, indicating the frothing milk cup in her hand, "is all people in the countryside drink. Milk, milk and more milk."

"And vodka surely," said one of our group confidently. "Where did you hear that?" said the Mongolian, astonished at hearing her country folk described as a bunch of drunks.

"In Mongolia," she said firmly, "we have a saying which encapsulates our attitude to alcohol. It says you can't drink at all till you are 30 years old, from 30 to 60 you may drink only a sip or two, and it's only when you've retired and are too old to work that you're allowed to drink more than that - and even then only to enjoy the drink - not to get drunk.

"So there's no alcoholism in Mongolia?"

"Well, yes," she said, "but which society doesn't have its tipplers and boozers?"

#### Vodka toasts

Back in the capital Ulaanbaatar and we're in a bar adjacent to the Chinghis Khan beer factory. A scratchy Celine Dion tape croons the theme song of the Titanic as tongues thicken and eyes glaze over among the bar's clientele. In pre-communist Mongolia the moral authority of the family and tradition might have kept Mongolians

away from drink, but in the 50 long years since then, vodka toasts have entered Mongolian social etiquette.

Let's look at the facts – in Soviet times every province of Mongolia had a food processing factory – where food was canned or preserved for export back to the Soviet Union.

#### Unemployment and alcohol

The food factories now stand silent, desolate and draughty - windowpanes long shattered but not replaced - monuments to the fall of communism.

Except for one department of the factory - the only section that hasn't ceased production is the distillery the part that produces vodka.

It's no wonder that international aid organizations are concerned. Mongolian men have been drinking vodka for 50 years - but it's the tragic combination of unemployment and alcohol which is alarming.

And as though to confirm the stereotype - everywhere you turn in the capital - it's the women you see at work. In other countries this would be attributed to their willingness to take on low-status secretarial positions - but in Mongolia women work in cities because they're also more highly educated.

The UN representative in Ulaanbaatar told me that of all the countries in the world he's lived in, Mongolia

is unique in having more girls than boys at school.

The end of communism and the consequent unemployment have forced Mongolian men back to the traditional nomadic herding lifestyle of their forefathers - the men and boys are back on the land - the girls still in cities gaining that all-important schooling and eventually getting the jobs.

It's not all Mongolian men who are drunks - only some of the unemployed ones - and it's not only the

women who despair – but the men in the countryside as well.

All, I suppose, except the ones who own the vodka factories.

(courtesy BBC Radio)

## **Up Close and Personal**

Interview with Ms. M. Enkhsetseg, Programme Support Unit Officer, UNDP

When did you start working for the UN?

It has been six years now

With your varied and rich experience with the UN, do you see any improvements in your field of work?

I worked as the PSU Officer for quite some time. I deal with rules and regulations of UNDP procedures. For the last few years there were some improvements in procedures. Much paper work and bureaucracy is reduced. Things are being decentralized. For instance, for every revision you had to get HQs approval, but now the country office is authorized to make certain approvals.

How do you spend your leisure time?

For longer vacations, I like going to the country. On shorter holidays, I like reading Russian classics, walking and keeping a diary.

What is your favourite book? Why?

Leo Tolstoi's "Anna Karenina". I think as a woman she is the ideal female character. I admire her faithfulness to her principles and thoughts and the ability to sacrifice for her

What is the main principle guiding your life?
To be honest, humane and determined. Myself, I try to follow these. I really hate lies and deceit.
You've decided to become a UNV. What is the reason?

First of all, I think it's time for change. For six years I've been doing different things in the office. On the other hand, after working in the PSU I learnt something that could be of help to others. I feel confident that I can deliver the knowledge to somebody else. When, I heard about the chance, I felt proud to be chosen to establish such a unit in a different UNDP office. As well; this will be another experience in my career and life.

How do you see your future life?

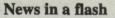
What I am thinking about now is to broaden my knowledge and skills through study. To go further I really need substantial

By the way, what is your background?

Electronics engineer.

What is your last thought you would like to share with our readers?

For young people (about 20-30 year old) I would like to say, "improve your knowledge, study, don't discourage yourselves and be hard-working."



The Government of Mongolia and Property Programme. On the request of National Forestry Programme. And the Environment, the The Government of Mongolia has adopted a the Ministry for Nature and the Environment, the support and advice on the programme as well as on drafting the National Forestry Policy, was provided by Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) adviser Mr. Chandrasekhara. It was recommended at a Cabinet session that action on raising public awareness and on actual implementation should be carried out in time by the Ministry for Nature and the Environment, the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and local governors and their offices.

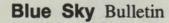
1995 figures show Mongolia's forests occupy 17.5 million hectares of which 12.7mln is actually covered with trees. This means forest only covers 8.1 per cent of the total territory of Mongolia, a very low figure when comparing with other countries. In 1996 alone, 2.3 million n hectares of area caught fire and 250,000 hectares was completely destroyed.

The regional project on gender development was signed recently between the Governments of Mongolia, China and South Korea. Biochemical technology and its application for the advancement of women scientists and the alleviation of poverty isMongolia's priority. Animal husbandry was an important component of the Mongolian economy. Mare's milk is plentiful and consumed widely by Mongolians. However, this is only seasonal consumption. In order to make it a year round consumption and improve storage conditions, Mongolian scientists would cooperate with women scientists from South Korea and China on developing new technologies to avoid getting rancid taste and to determine suitable condition of spray drying. They would also look into new ways to analyze the chemical composition of mare's milk and conduct experiments into the healing properties of mare's milk. Mongolia's main concern is to develop technology to utilize mare's milk that will increase the incomes of rural households.

s part of an integrated effort in prepara Ation of the 1999 Mongolian HDR, the National Statistical Office, using financial and technical support from UNDP's Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation Project, is conducting a comprehensive Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) during the month of July. The survey is designed to compile holistic information about the residents at both urban and rural areas.

The analysis is expected to provide hard facts on the general well-being of the population. Other information being gathered includes housing, education, health, employment, income, expenditure and household participation on farm and non-farm private industries The LSMS will continue to be conducted regularly, and will serve as major source of information for not only the MHDR, but for all development programmes in the

The UN online magazine "Ger" will be launched in September (http://www.unmongolia.mn). The magazine, in both English and Mongolian, will focus on the personal stories of Mongolians and will include information on the cooperation of UN agencies with the Government of Mongolia. It will be written by journalists working in Mongolia. UN agencies cooperating on the magazine include United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), UN Volunteers (UNV), UNDP, the human rights agency (UNHCHR) and UNESCO. This will be an invaluable source of information for our partners in development, including the Government of Mongolia, donors, NGOs and Internet users in Mongolia and around the world.



#### Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia \* Issue #7 \* July 1998

#### When disaster strikes: Coordinating international relief

By A. Delgermaa

The charred remains of a mountain side leave a black hole on the landscape. Devastated by two days fire in Uliastai, a suburb of Ulaanbaatar, it is a common sight during the Mongolian spring. The country experienced one of its worst natural disasters in 1996, when catastrophic forest fires struck 16 aimags, raising 10.5 million hectares of forest and pastureland. It became apparent that the ability of the government and civil society to respond to natural disasters had been severely weakened during the transition period.

This year has offered further remin-ders that Mongolia is not immune to disasters. Two severe wind storms - the most serious in the far west of the country, Bayan-Ulgii - killed thousands of livestock and caused widespread damage to property. There have also been minor earthquakes that bear reminder Mongolia sits on several fault lines.

The Sukhbaatar storm on June 17 saw winds reach 40 metres a second. Except one case of frozen man, no other victims were reported. More than Tg 10 million damage was caused and and 24,000 heads of livestock were lost. Damages included collapsed gers, houses, fences and electricity poles. About 20 households were left without any livestock. The local government took some measures to help the households to purchase gers. In the aftermath, the local government is helping the herders with purchasing new livestock and developing an insurance scheme for livestock. Among the herders there were none insured for livestock

UNDP took the initiative to firm up disaster preparedness capabilities after the 1996 fires. Through its US \$329,000 Support to Communitybased Rehabilitation of Forest and Disaster Management Project, UNDP in partnership with the Nature and Environment Ministry, has been working on improving the country's ability to handle natural disas-

Administrative reforms within the United Nations have also placed a greater responsibility on UNDP to coordinate all international disaster relief when crisis strikes. To assist this effort, a DM UN team (Disaster Management team) comprising UN organizations with representation in Mongolia (UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF), has been functioning since last year to help in coordinating assistance to the country if the government requests it. When the request comes, the DM team makes a direct appeal to national and international NGOs or donor countries to help Mongolia.

The project term is finishing this year but disaster management has started to take hold in the country. In the wake of the 1996 fires, an extensive reforestation component has been key to the project. Four groups of families consisting of up to 24 families in Selenge and Arhangai aimags are authorized to run forest-related businesses tax-free in return for taking care of the environment and fire prevention measures and reforestation.

"Land is privately-owned in other countries. People are allowed to use land and the project is getting successful despite most land being state-owned in Mongolia," notes Arnold Alhback, a Swedish United Nations Volunteer (UNV) and the project consultant.

The draft Programme of National Disaster Reduction has been developed and, according to the national coordinator, J. Batbayar, this leaves the government in the driver's seat of all disaster management and relief.

Youth come first ...

(cont. from page 1)

The United Nations in Mongolia has been no stranger to youth issues through the projects and programming of its agencies. And there are tangible successes in United Nations projects in support to the Government: support to poverty alleviation, to women and children, support to economic transition and sound governance, the introduction of modern information technology, to sustainable use of natural resources

and support for prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Several excellent models have been set up for cooperation between the Government, the United Nations and the NGO community.

Building on tangible successes of the past, the Memoran-dum of Understanding on Youth hopes to provide a frame-work for meeting young Mongolians' needs today and into

About the significance of the document Mr. Sh. Batbayar, Minister for Health and Social Welfare, noted: We are signing this document at this particular time when the Government of Mongolia announced this year the year of Youth and it is working towards reformulating the state policy on youth in line with the overall transition in the

The UN system in Mongolia expressed its readiness to support. Mr. Douglas Gardner, UN Resident Coordinator stresses "We will do our best to coordinate with you and to

cusure that our assistance is effective and well-targeted."

The Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Ts. Elbegdorj, chose the signing as an opportunity to award UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Douglas Gardner as one of the most outstanding persons who have contributed to the success of the Year of Youth. Previous recipients have come from diverse backgrounds, including a wrestler, a student, a herder a poet and business people. Mr. Gardner indicated his deep appreciation for the award and wished to share the accolades with "the talented members of government working on youth issues, the creative Mongolian NGOs addessing the needs of young people, and my fellow UN team members who are working together to support Mongolia's national priorities." The Tg 100,000 prize money will be spent





The underground stove is commonly used in eastern aimags.

#### Arrivals/Departures

Ms. M. Enkhsetseg, Programme Support Unit Officer is moving to UNDP- Tadjikistan as a UNV; Ms. S. Enkhtuya will replace Ms. M. Enkhsetseg in her absence for a year, Ms. O. Oyunlham started working as a finance assistant; Mr. Marion Antony Zalcman, a Polish UNV, commenced his work on a Reproductive Health Survey at the National Statistical Office; Ms. Pauline Prince, an Australian UNV will work as a Health Educator for WASH-21, the water and sanitation project; Ms. Margaret Bonner, Australian UNV, will work as a Pharmacist at the WHO; HIV/AIDS health adviser and UNV Nicholas Bates is returning to Australia; UNV Programme Officers Beatriz Chua and Kwan-Koo Choi will finish their assignments in August.

# List of new publications and reports available in UN Information Shop

1. World Resources 1998-1999, A Guide to the Global Environment, Environmental Change and Human Health

The World Resources Institute, UNEP, UNDP, IBRD, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998 (in English)

2. Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss An Analytical Approach by Pamela Stedman-Edwards, WWF, 1998 (in English)

3. World Disaster Report 1998 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998 (in English)

4. The Progress of Nations 1998 UNICEF New York (in English and Russian)

5. Earth Summit +5 Programme for the Further Implementation of AGENDA 21

UN, UNDPI, 1997 (in English)

6. The World Health Report 1998. Life in the 21st Century. A Vision for all WHO, France, 1998

7. Children at Risk in Central and East-

ern Europe: Perils and Promises

Economies in Transition Studi Regional monitoring Report N4, UNICEF, 1997 (in English and Russia

8. Review of the Youth Situation, Policies and Programmes in Asia and the Pacific UN, ESCAP, 1997 (in English)

9. Biological Diversity in Mongolia: First National Report

MNE, UNDP, GEF

Mongolia, 1998 (in English)

10. United Nations System in Mongolia:

1997 Annual Report
Mongolia, 1998 (a English and Mongolian)
11. AIDS Update 1997: A Report on
UNFPA Support for HIV/AIDS Prevention
UNFPA, New York, 1998

12. The Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st Century: MAP 21 (Executive Summary and Strategic Analysis)

Government of Mongolia, UNDP, MAP 21, 1998 (in En-

glish)

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is August 18.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are free! We can send the newsletter to you electronically, via e-mail, or by post. Just send us your address and how you would like to receivethe newsletter and we will rush it out straight away.

All submissions must be sent to the Communications Office, UNDP, 7 Erkhuu St., Ulaanbaatar, PO Box 49/207. Telephone: (976-1) 321539. Fax: (976-1) 326221. E-mail: dsouth@undp.org.mn Please check out the United Nations Homepage at http://www.unmongolia.mn

Blue Sky Bulletin



# Blue Sky Bulletin



Issue #8, August 1998

Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia

# Poor Nutrition Taking its Toll on the Health of Mongolians

By Jacinda Mawson, Consultant

After transition, production of major foods plummeted, including wheat, potatoes and vegetables. Overall, Mongolians began eating a more simplified diet, based upon meat and flour, and consuming fewer kilocalories than before. Concurrently, the prevalence of poverty increased dramatically, and currently at least 25 percent of Mongolians live under the poverty line. In addition, nutrition status is not adequate. Almost one-quarter of Mongolian children under five years old are shorter than they should be, due to chronic malnutrition, rickets, or some combination of the two. About 40 percent of children and at least 20 percent of pregnant mothers suffer from anemia, a population prevalence considered by the World Health Organization to be of high public health significance. Iodine deficiency is widespread; in some geographical areas 40 to 60 percent of the population display some degree of goitre, while one-half of Mongolian children under five years old display clinical signs of rickets. Not only are acute deficiencies on the rise, but the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer continues to increase, as does the rate of alcoholism.

Members of the United Nations country team, including WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNDP, along with FAO and IFAD, have been collaborating with counterparts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare as part of the theme group on Food Security and Nutrition to draft the Memorandum of Understanding on Food Security and Nutrition. The MOU is coordinated by the UN Resident Coordinator's office, and emphasizes four main objectives: policy and activities, food production, household food security, and improving nutrition status. The agreement was inspired by the recent flurry of activity in this sector, including the success of the Mongolian Government's Green Revolution, and the ministerial review of the National Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition. By pairing food security and nutrition together, the theme group hopes to address the issues more holistically and specifically. For example, some micronutrient issues can be addressed by looking at food supply and fortification of foods.

A pledge of solidarity and partnership forms the basis of the MOU, to continue to build upon international conferences and agreements, and to acknowledge and continue the success of current activities like the Green Revolution. The MOU is also a pledge to look towards the future more cohesively. The United Nations affirms the commitment by the UN country team to build a better partnership with the Government by enhancing cooperation within its own agencies, thereby providing more coordinated support. Enhancing coordination among UN agencies embodies the global UN strategy for cooperation outlined by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his Agenda for Reform.

(cont. on page 4)

## 1998 Global Report Tackles Myths of Consumption

The world is producing and consuming more goods and services then ever before in human history. A significant portion of this consumer boon has reached some developing countries. Between 1975 and 1995, the number of

radios sold in Africa increased by more than 400 per cent; TVs in Latin America by more than 500 per cent; automobiles in East Asia by 1,400 per cent. That's the good news.

This year's global Human Development Report, released at the beginning of September, goes to the heart of the world's consumption patterns, exploding many commonly-held myths. The Report says that the world will consume a record US \$24 trillion in goods and services in 1998, six times the figure of 1975.

The Report targets the new global consumers, the products they consume and the impact this has on the environment and the quality of people's lives. The 1998 Global Human Development Report also challenges readers by putting a price tag on bringing basic consumption to all the world's population. To provide basic education for all would cost US \$6 billion; Europeans spend US \$11 billion a year on

ice cream. To bring basic health and nutrition to all would cost US \$13 billion; Americans and Eu-

ropeans spend US \$12 billion a year on perfume. To put every child in school would cost US \$6 billion; Europeans imbibe US \$105 billion in alcoholic drinks every year.

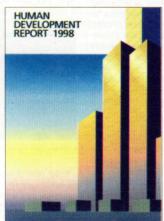
People are consuming more in food, energy, education, transportation, communication and enter-

tion, communication and entertainment than ever before. However, the question is posed: "Do all people in the world have the same access to this consumption?" The Report pinpoints one billion people in the world who can't even meet their most basic consumption requirements: food and water.

Among the 4.4 billion people living in developing countries, three-fifths live without basic sanitation; one-third are without safe drinking water; one-quarter lack adequate housing; one-fifth live beyond reach of modern health services; one-fifth percentage are undernourished.

The report notes that, despite these high growth rates in consumption, developing countries are nowhere near catching up with levels of consumption in the world's richest nations. It also warns that when social standards rise faster than incomes, consumption patterns become unbalanced. However consumption is the lifeblood of much human progress and the real

issue is not consumption, but its patterns and effects.



Mongolia is at the same 101st place as last year among 174 countries according to the Human Development Index, that is below than the average in the medium human development rank. Canada is topping the list for 5 consecutive years now.

The Human Development Index

measures the overall achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development - longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living. It is measured by life expectancy, educational attainment (adult literacy and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment) and adjusted income.



The Citizen Information Service Centres in Ulaanbaatar, Tuv aimag, Kharkhorin, Arvaikheer (Uvurkhangai aimag), Mandalgovi (Dundgovi aimag), Murun (Khuvsgul aimag) help to support democracy through provision of access to information and information technology.

#### Northeast Asian Women's Forum Boosts Regional Cooperation

Northeast Asian Women's forum "Women's Empowerment and Development" was held in Ulaanbaatar at the end of August. Bringing together 320 representatives of women's NGOs from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea and Taiwan - and reviewed the developments in women's situation over the past two years since the Seoul forum.

Unemployment, poverty, discrimination, violence against women, inadequate situation of rural women, a gap between gender equality, increasing capacity of women's NGOs in the region was discussed at the forum. The participants urge governments to take measures towards providing better social protection to women; creation of desirable working conditions and opportunities for women; improve access of women to financial services and training and education in business management and administration; ratify the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families; enforce gender equality and ensure women's right to equal participation and representation in political decision-making. These actions to be enforced at the national and regional levels.

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# Blue Sky Bulletin

#### News in a flash

Mongolia became a member of the interna tional organization for a natural gas pipeline. The North-East Asian regional conference in late August was funded by UNDP Mongolia under the Think Tank Project. Representatives from Japan, Russia, China, UK, America and others took part in the conference. Experts are saying a gas pipeline through Mongolia would have many benefits: economic, political, social and environmental. Mongolia is the shortest route from the gas fields of Siberia to the booming market of China. To be or not to be, that is the question before the end of this year.

Rumour, hearsay and yellow journalism in newspapers leaves many organizations tainted with the odor of corruption," according to Mr. Tserendorj, UNDP Programme Officer. This phenomenon occurs in many countries in transition. Recent examples are the issues related to Erdenet copper-mining corporation, the merging of the state-owned bank with the private one and the customs department. The major thing is to start fighting corruption while it's small and handy, otherwise it deepens and grows into the roots. It can balloon beyond the government's control and be very hard to eliminate."

As the follow up to a Bangkok regional workshop on anti-corruption, the Mongolian government working group on corruption is exploring further actions to be undertaken by the government. The working group wants further study to be done on this issue to determine how widespread corruption is.

To assist the government in this action, UNDP is inviting a Singaporean professor for a one-week mission to Mongolia. The mission will perform a needs assessment, formulate an action plan and explore the possibilities of opening the representative office of Transparency International in Mongolia. Anti-corruption is one of the main issues receiving support from UNDP.

As a follow up to the National Summit on Sustainable Development in the 21st Century, the western region is conducting a workshop at the end of this month. While discussing the impact of this summit, the workshop will look into details of implementation of MAP-21 and the integration of Aimag Action Programmes with the national one. Governors of Hovd, Govi-Altai and Uvs aimags will take part in the workshop.

The world's population is changing shape, pro foundly affecting development prospects for the 21st century. It is still growing by more than 80 million people per year, and will pass the 6 billion mark in mid-1999.

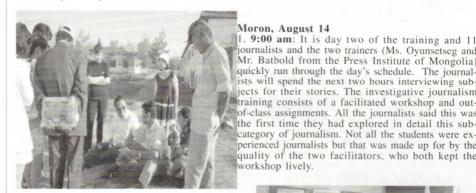
More young people than ever are entering their childbearing and working years- over I billion are now between the ages of 15-24, mostly due to high fertility rates in the recent past. At the same time, greater numbers of people, and growing proportions of countries' populations, are living to older ages.

The future will be shaped by how well societies meet the needs of these "new generations": education and health - including reproductive health - for the young, and social, medical and financial support for the elderly. This challenge is the theme of this year's State of World Population report from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The official global launch of the report took place at the beginning of September.

#### Lake Huvsgul

# Development Profile: Introducing Investigative Journalism to Local Media

Text and photos by David South

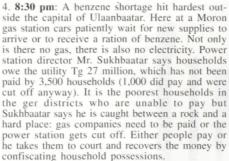


2. 11:30 am: The debate begins over the stories. One team has chosen to look at poverty alleviation projects at the Bak level. They want to write a story looking at poor accountability for loans, the practice of nepotism and the ability of recipients to start small businesses. The team investigating the power black out wants to do further interviews with the poorest people af fected by the black outs.



3. 4:00 pm: Back at the Erkh Choloo (Freedom) newspaper, editor Nyamjav discusses the week's news with his graphic designer. I visited the offices of "Erkh Choloo" newspaper and was impressed by the skill level of the staff. While they had only one computer and barren offices, the graphic designer was using PageMaker software to layout the newspaper (it won an award from the PIM for being the best local paper in 1997). The designer wanted to receive more training to upgrade his skills. The newspaper will be cut off from local government subsidies for printing at the end of this year and is already making plans to find other sources of revenue. "The training allows us to learn about western theories of

journalism," says editor Mr. Nyamjav. "The training has noticeably changed our stories - I know how to criticize reporters and push them to be more investigative."





5. 9:00 pm: I was asked to conduct a one-hour discussion of my experiences as an investigative journalist in Canada and England. The debate afterwards was lively (despite being at 9 pm!). A common question was how to deal with pressure from government and corporations to alter the content of stories. Being regional journalists, a common complaint was the difficulty in distributing newspapers to remote communities. They asked how international donors could help in this matter, pointing out that in the past the government subsidized newspaper distribution to a greater extent. They also wanted a connection to international journalists in some way, preferably through an association. My general impression was that

UNDP's projects have helped a great deal in connecting these journalists but much more needs to be done. They face enormous difficulties not encountered by journalists in the capital, including stagnant local economies, large distances, inadequate training and revenue.



#### **Economic Reforms Exact Heavier Price on Women**

In June UNDP Mongolia hosted a visit of journalists to see our projects in Ulaanbaatar and the Gobi Desert. This story is just one amongst many that resulted from that trip.

#### By Suvendrini Kakuchi

reforms.

Life had never been easy for Jinsmaa, who lives in a small arid town in the South Gobi Desert. But when the national government decided to embark on free market reforms nearly a decade ago, things got even tougher for her.

While wages had been low under the socialist system, no one had really been in want even in the remote regions

because the state had provided for the basics of life: health care, education, jobs and pensions,

But then the Soviet Union, which had been subsidizing Mongolia in large part, fell apart. Forced to fend for itself, this Central Asian country decided that the only way to survive was to renounce socialism and implement economic

The transition, however, has been painful for Mongolians - especially the women, as well as the children and the elderly, says UNDP. Jinsmaa, for example, lost her job as a schoolteacher two years ago. Indeed, of the 900 people now unemployed in Dalanzadgad, where Jinsma and her family live, 600 are women.

And while nationwide statistics indicate that the percentage of unemployed women are just slightly higher than that of men - 51 per cent against 49 per cent — observers say women are more likely to stay jobless than their male

counterparts Childcare subsidies have all but disappeared, as has state aid for the elderly. Women are thus being expected to stay home more than ever to take care of the aged and the children - many of whom are spending much of the time at home because

their parents can no longer afford to send them to school. Official figures also indicate that of Mongolia's estimated 46,000 households, almost 80 per cent are headed by single mothers, with divorcees and widows making up the majority of the household heads.

Social workers say economic hardship is a major factor in the rise of broken families in the country. It is also one

of the causes of the increasing number of women who are being beaten up by their husbands.

Unsurprisingly, social workers say large numbers of Mongolians who live below the poverty line - defined as those earning lower than Tg 9,500 (US\$11) a month- are women. Of Mongolia's 2.3 million people, about 40 per cent are poor, and their ranks are growing every day.

In the same year, Jinsmaa lost her job, a National Forum on Women in Development was held here in the Mongolian capital. The Forum pinpointed the need to empower women with jobs that would help them out of their financial ruts and would also enable them to uphold their independence.

The goal, said the Forum participants, was not just to aid Mongolian women in surviving the economic transition, but also to help them strengthen their decision-making abilities and be in control of their own lives

But as one social worker here admits, "The road is a long one. With the current economic problems faced by the country, there is lack of funds to transfer to women's programmes."

Not many people are looking at the politicians for help, since women's representation in politics is very low. Out of Mongolia's 76 members of parliament, only seven are women. All the Cabinet members are men. Jinsmaa, though, has been fortunate enough to become a part of a grassroots project that makes and sells tradi-

tional Mongolian saddles and boots. The project is under the National Poverty Alleviation Programme that is funded jointly by the World Bank and the UNDP.

A former collective farm supervisor had spearheaded the project, managing to get a loan of US\$ 250 for it. There are 16 young women, including Jinsmaa, now 27, who are part of it. The women, work five days a week and each earn an average of Tg 30,000

The basic materials for the saddles and boots are bought at the Chinese border. The work is hard, and on any given hour during any workday, a visitor can find most of the women lost in their work. The intricate designs are sewn with a bright, blue thread, the needles alternately flying up and then digging hard into solid leather.

Jinsmaa says she wants to go back to school and study again, perhaps a course that can land her a better job that will pay more. But she acknowledges that this is just not possible now, given Mongolia's current sorry economic state. Jinsmaa is thankful for small mercies. At least she and her husband - who has kept his job as an electrician - are still married. And while her fingers are all scarred because of her constant needlework, Jinsmaa says she is happy with Mongolia's economic transition, and is determined to make it. "I work hard," she declares, "and am grateful for being employed."

(Courtesy Inter Press Service)

#### Up close and Personal

Interview with Mr. Mijiddorj, UNDP Senior driver

#### Which trip to the countryside was the most interesting and memorable?

I've been to all regions now, except western aimags. From what I've seen in my trips, the most impressive project was the one in Uvurkhangai aimag. A widow with 11 kids feeding the whole family. It was really impressive to see how she and her kids were doing different things in order to live. They were milling barley and producing flour for their own consumption and for sale, collecting scrap-metal for exchange for other things, making brushes from horse hair and selling them. This shows that if you work hard and really try you can reach your goal.

May be you can share with us an anecdote or a funny story from your trips.

Once we went down to South Govi with a journalist and a consultant from Bangladesh. It happened so that the consultant arrived in the country the day before and his luggage was delayed. The next day after arrival, he had to go with us to the country. So, he had no choice and went to the Govi in what he was dressed. He bought some bread and mayonnaise. This was all he took with him to the Govi. Driving to the Govi is very far, about 1,500 kms both ways. On this journey he was so tired and worn out and complained about the length of the road. He was so happy when he got back to the city. It was fun. We had nice time there

When did you join the UN?

I started with a project in 1990 and in 1992 I joined UNDP.

How much has UNDP changed?

Before we did not have this many staff. Up to 1996-1997 we did not use to go out of the city. Now we go to the country quite often. As well, before we had only two drivers in the office, but now we have four - even then everyone is so busy, no one is sitting for pleasure. Three ResReps have changed in my time.

How do you see your future?

The only thing I pray for is not to see anyone in my family in the "street". Number of people, who lived reasonably well in the past, have become careless.

What do you keep telling your children?

Be friendly with anyone, treat people equally and I always tell not to have bad intentions towards other people. If you have bad intentions, I believe the failure will fall back on you.

What movies do you like watching?

Old Mongolian movies. I watch them everytime they are on TV - and I never get bored. They are so real, good casting, good production. They are not like modern movies. Not comparable. As well I like watching cartoons with my kids.

## News in a flash

The UN General Assembly has declared the years 1996-2006 "The Decade for the Eradication of Poverty Worldwide". Each year on October 17 is Poverty Eradication Day. Since 1996, the National Poverty Alleviation Programme Office in Mongolia, UN agencies and with the help of many other organizations commemorated the day successfully. Variety of remarkable activities directed towards helping out the poor took place during the last two years. Charity concerts for kindergartens of kids from poor families and street children, skills training activities among the poor and street kids, visiting the poverty alleviation projects locally, exhibition and marketing of goods and products produced under the various poverty alleviation projects. These activities had their significance in raising the awareness of the community and solidifying the pledge to fight poverty.

This year the day is going to be commemorated with various activities involving NGOs, the business community, international organizations and the diplomatic corps; a charity concert; a display of products of vulnerable group people. A special activity "Let's respect and help each other" will also be organized, offering an opportunity for people to help their neighbours, street kids, elderly people, orphans and other needy people. A collection of clothes, food, books, pens, fuel and other goodies will

also take place.

The first UN online magazine "Ger" is going The first UN online magazine to be launched at the beginning of September. The theme of the first issue is "Youth in Transition". The magazine is not a newsletter, but life stories that give insight into the way young people live. Articles opening people's eyes to the many lifestyles, aspirations, hardships, dreams and disappointments that are the hallmark of Mongolian youth in the years following communism, will be the major scope of the magazine. You can read the magazine on the UN website at http://www.un-mongolia.mn.

The national Youth summit took place from August 22-26. Youth is the main target of HIV/AIDS and STD prevention activities. During the summit, with the funding of more than Tg 200,000 from UNDP's HIV/AIDS project, various measures will be taken to disseminate information, professional advice and in-kind assistance. At the Youth Advocacy Show on HIV/ AIDS and STDs, condoms and advertising materials were distributed among more than 1,000 participants from all over the country. The most interesting part of the show is the role play on the ABCs of HIV prevention. As well, information will be provided on what to do and whom to address to in case of STD symptoms occurrence. Participants got a wide range of information on HIV/AIDS and STDs at the summit.

Support to exports was the topic of the last Economic Club discussion, which was held in the beginning of August. This time the number of participants was limited to private sector representatives and researchers. Politicians were busy due to the on-going search for a new Prime Minister. However, the discussion was fruitful and the outcome was a draft proposal to address Mongolia's export policy. The proposal is going to be finalized and submitted to the GovernMicrocredit development in Mongolia

# "It is important for Mongolia to be independent from foreign aid"

What is microcredit? Has Mongolia experienced microcredit before? microcredit help to reduce poverty in the country? These are common questions whenever the topic of microcredit is raised. The poverty alleviation programme was launched in Mongolia in 1994. Since that time, one of the main components of the programme has been income-generation by providing credit to vulnerable indi-viduals and groups of people, particularly to single mothers, to help them to fight the hardships of transition. Loans given under the programme to Mr. Robert Cater, American technical assistance expert, "Microcredit is usually between US \$50-500. So, in Mongolia, poverty credit can be considered micro, but it is not exactly credit - it is more charity assistance. It does not charge interest whereas credit involves charging interest. I would say it is important for Mongolia to be independent from foreign assistance. By charging interest and utilizing the saved money for other services, sustainable long-term provision of services will be ensured at a certain level."

It's been a month since UNDP's MicroStart Project started operation. Within this period of time work has focused on setting up the operational structure of the project. Co-chaired

Regional Women's forum

(cont. from page 1)

In the opening speech given by Ms. D. Nergui about the rights of women, Vice Chairperson of Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS)noted: "Women are not asking for privileges. All they want is participation in decision making. I personally would seriously doubt the success of an attempt to develop the country without fully mobilizing the intellect, skills and the commit-ment of more than half of our population, that is our women." Further, talking about how social development is important for the development of the country states: "... the financial and economic crisis that has erupted in a number of Asian countries shows what may be in store for us if economic growth-oriented policies are not combined with policies promoting social development and equitable redistribution, if the financial sys-tem is not healthy and free of corruption." At the end of her speech she noted that "women somehow always do manage to cope with the apparently insurmountable problems both in our private family lives and at work. Probably we are destined to be this strong. But we will be inspired even more if our tremendous work, our skills, commitment and motivation are duly recognized. I would like to say that our women and their organizations stand ready to cooperate with the government in this regard." This was the main message of the whole forum, of all women and women's NGOs, participated in the forum.

In Mongolia, as the follow up to the forum, it is necessary to raise the gender issue at the decision making level in order to increase and improve vote of women in decision making. In the present Parliament only seven out of 76 parliamentarians are women and none in the Cabi-

The next regional women's forum will be held in Taiwan in the year 2000.

## **Arrivals/Departures**

Ms. B. Bayarmaa, Programme Clerk to the Governance and Economic Transition team in UNDP finished her contract and Ms. R. Dashnyam is replacing her; Ms. Ariuntuul's contract was extended as UNDP Receptionist; Ms. Munkhjargal will continue as Programme Clerk to the Human Development team; Mr. Rogier Gruys has extended his contract as an Intranet Officer until November of this year.

by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare and the UNDP Resident Representative, the MicroStart Advisory Committee (MAC) was established. It also includes parliamentarians, private sector representatives and NGOs as members of the Committee.

The MAC has identified implementing partners: the Mongolian Women's Federation, the Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS), as they are involved in credit already and have the largest network in the country. Implementation proposals were developed by the partners and

approved by MAC.

Under the project four branch offices will be set up: in Hentii, Sainshand and Airag soum of Dornogovi and in one of the low-income districts in Ulaanbaatar. The project is working towards inauguration of the 1st branch in September in Hentii aimag.

As well, MAC will fund a 2nd Mongolian tier institution, which will be providing advisory support, technical assistance, development of reporting standards, provide potentially wholesale loans to partner institutions.

The total budget of the project is US \$1 million with US \$333,333 for administration and US \$ 666,666 for local institutions to set up microcredit lenders.

Food and Nutrition

(cont. from page 1)

Despite such discouraging statistics, there are recent improvements in the nutrition and food security sectors. In 1997, for the first time in six years, the grain harvest increased from the year before, by nine percent from the 1996 harvest. In addition, this year thousands of families responded to the call of the Green Revolution, learning how to grow vegetables in household gardens and in local plots. As a result of their widespread efforts, the total amount of land planted with potatoes and vegetables for 1998 increased by more than 35 percent over the land area planted in 1997, and an increased output of 47 percent is expected this year. Child mortality has been decreasing, due at least in part to the success of the MOHSW/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. Currently, Mongolia boasts a near universal breast-feeding rate, now considered one of the most successful programmes in the world. Such partnerships between the government and the UN system, as well as cohesive integration within the nutrition and food security sector, will be the key to future successes.

On Monday, August 24 the members of the UN Food Security and Nutrition Theme Group convened a large group of all major players in food security and nutrition in Mongolia. The UN consultant presented the MOU, and government counterparts from the MAI and the MOHSW presented current activities in the sector. The meeting addressed gaps in current programming and planning. Finally, the attendees signed up for six special working groups to advess issues more intensively in the future, including: Implementation and Coordination, Food Security, Food Production, Household Food Security, Nutrition, Monitoring and Evaluation. "I have been hoping for a meeting like this for three years," said Mr. Ts. Maider, initiator of the Green Revolution.

List of new publications and reports available in UN Information Shop

1. Proecto TACIS City Twinning: Shared Management in Environment. / Байгаль орчны асуудлыг хамтарсан хариуцлагын дагуу зохицуулан шийдвэрлэх/

Tacis, 1997 (in English, Mongolian and Spanish)

2. Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology. Emerging Technology series. UNIDO, 1997 (in English)

3. Maritime Labour Conventions and Recommendations. Fourth (revised) edition ILO, 1998 (in English)

4. Investigation Report on Production Technology and Utilization of Briquette in Mongolia

Korea Institute of Energy Research, China University of Mining and Technology, 1998 (in English)

5.Capacity Assessment and Development in a System and Strategic Management Context. Technical Advisory Paper No. 3, UNDP, 1998 (in English)

6.Handbook on Foreign Direct Investment by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

Lessons from Asia, UNCTAD, 1998 (in English)

7. Foreign Direct Investment, Trade, Aid and Migration UNCTAD, International Organization for Mi-

gration, 1996 (in English)

8. Амьдралд хэрэгтэй баримтууд.
Сурталчилгааны гарын авлага

Сурталчилгааны гарын авлага Монгол Улсын Эрүүл Мэндийн Яам, 1992 Монгол хэлээр

9. Conservation and Management of Yak Genetic Diversity.
Proceedings of a Workshop 29-31 October,

1998, Nepal, FAO (in English)

10. Food Quality and Safety Systems. A training manual on food hygiene and

tems. A training manual on food hygiene and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system, FAO,1998 (in English)

11. The Green Book: An Environ-

11. The Green Book: An Environmental Awareness Handbook.

A joint publication of EPAP,UNDP Communications Office, TACIS and the Ministry of Nature and Environment, October 1998 (in Mongolian)

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is September 20.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are free! We can send the newsletter to you electronically, via e-mail, or by post. Just send us your address and how you would like to receivethe newsletter and we will rush it out straight away.

All submissions must be sent to the Communications Office, UNDP, 7
Erkhuu St., Ulaanbaatar,
PO Box 49/207.
Telephone: (976-1) 321539.
Fax: (976-1) 326221.

E-mail: dsouth@undp.org.mn Please check out the United Nations Homepage at http:// www.un-mongolia.mn



#### Blue Sky Bulletin

issue #9. October-November 1998

Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia



#### UN supports food security and nutrition

By Delgerwig, B5k+B Reporter

With improved crop prospects in 1997, and an increase in the harvest of rine per cost from 1990, optimists were looping this year would keep up the good news. Unfortunately, this year's harvost of 188,323 werees is the worst in four decides, according to the Agriculture Ministry. The quasel: A wat sumreer and early snow playing have: with exp harvesting. But not all the news is bad. The Genorement's Green Revolution - an ambitious compaign to increase the quantity of vegetables and fruits grown in the country-bus proven a succost. Black excitet prices of regutables were down from last year most norticularly potasses, cabbagos and current - dictory staples. The news is also pool for the bords, with a Mangolian record 31.4 million boats of livestock, a guarantee the country won't starve.

During this hard time of uncertain food supply for the nation, UN organi-AND THE WORKER IN MORROUGH LUNDR UNICEE, WHO, World Block, UNIFRS. UNY, UNHCHR, IMF) signed an MOU on Food Security and Nutrition on Weeld Food Day, October 16. On Nevember 12, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) joined the other apencies by signing the

#### One World kickoff!

the final countdown is on to the first One Warld Youth Conference. The conferences - there are six in total - allow youth to learn more about the major. elabel sometic of the 1990s, while asploring ways to make those pledges reality in Mongalia, From November 20 to .. 23, the focus will be on children, with workshops on education, child labour, eatritice and broth AIDS/HIV/STDuSanaolity Education, children under difficult circumstances and the environment. Seven the 21 always (provinces), meaning over 14T yearh will attend each of the confereners. They have been chasen for their menograpion of Mongolis's cultural, so-

calendar in the Monaphian Covernment's those is also a Clue World thome some, with words be Burgai of the Scoot Association and melody by Parendori, Sorge of Mongolia's top pop masiciam joined togetter to sing the song.

Alseady large quantities of materials on the olohal summits and the UN have Continued so page 8

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#### News in a flash

The UNAIDS programme in Mongolia has had a busy autumn, according to its National Project Coordinator, Ms. Enkhjargal. The UNAIDS team has been reaping the benefits of the combined UN agencies Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy. Activities have been in full swing for the past few months, with health workers attending terminology workshops (often confusion over terminology can lead to confusion in IEC activities), which is part of the national IEC strategy. There have also been awareness raising seminars with senior police officials and with special squads who are responsible for commercial sex workers. And things look to be getting only busier, with World Aids Day on December 1 and a review of the programme and its Memorandum of Understanding to be conducted by Dr. Steven Kraus at the end of November.

Mongol Radio is broadcasting twice on Mondays (10:30 am/7:30 pm) programming on safe sex and HIV/AIDS.

**D**arlings of development workers in Africa, wind-up, battery-free radios are now available in Mongolia. A joint British/Mongolian company is selling the radios in the 1,000 Things market and in the popular Nomin electronics stores in Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan and Erdenet. The radio's chief advantage is that it doesn't need batteries and can be recharged by either a quick turn of the crank or through solar energy. The company is also selling a bright yellow torch that also acts as a small hand-held electricity generator. The downside is its retail price: US \$81 for the radio, the lantern is US \$75. Bill Murray admits it is a hard sell job to convince low-income Mongolians they will reap the savings over the long run by not having to buy batteries. Another problem is the cashless economy. "I could get a couple of sheep for these, but I'm not sure what I'd do with all those sheep," he told the UB Post. "But it is a problem, not just for me but for anybody trying to distribute stuff - both the difficulty of making contact and the difficulty of the exchange, because most people haven't got the cash." Keep in mind, the radios are a great gift for friends living in the countryside.

Tumen river meeting scheduled for October 15 in Ulaanbaatar was cancelled. At this point it is difficult to say when the meeting will be re-scheduled, but maybe in the first half of the new year. The Tumen River project is an ambitious UNDP-supported scheme to bring trade and economic opportunity to the countries situated near, or connected to, the Tumen River basin. The project is attempting to coordinate the government's of Russia, China, North Korea and Mongolia. It is hoped people in these areas, by working together, will be able to enjoy increased economic prosperity with access to a salt-water port in North Korea.

All human rights for all

# FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 1948 - 1998

# Mongolia joins the worldwide celebration

By Uyanga, Information Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Marea of human rights. But like countries around the world, December 10 will be a day to remind ourselves what constitutes human rights and to assess what has been achieved. Fifty years ago the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

Crafted in the aftermath of the barbarities of the Second World War, the Declaration defines the fundamental rights and freedoms of all human beings. Even though it is not a binding treaty, the document is now widely regarded as a quasi-obligatory set of standards, and a great many states have accepted legally binding obligations through formal conventions that include the concepts of UDHR. Moreover, many limited-purpose conventions are now in effect to afford protection against a considerable variety of human rights issues, such as those prohibiting forced labour and racial discrimination, providing equal rights for women and the like.

Today, a number of human rights activists, individuals and organisations are struggling to stop ongoing violation or deprivation of basic rights and freedoms, everything from the torture, rape and corrupt judicial systems to bonded labour, hunger and lack of access to health services, housing, sanitation, water, etc. The global struggle against atrocities, and commitment to the universal human rights walkways and murals, awards honouring national human rights heroes and defenders, public read-

ings and fund raising. Mongolians of different age range, backgrounds and regions are joining the world wide celebration of the jubilee by drawing pictures, writing essays, and attending conferences. The Mongolian government and ûthe United Nations country team are to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Human Rights, a document which reaffirms and strengthens the Government of Mongolia's commitment to promotion and protection of human rights.

## **Human Rights calendar:**

- One World Conference on Human Rights, December 7 to 10
- Children's Drawing Exhibition on human rights, song contest on human rights themes and "Implementation of Human Rights in my country" essay among law students, with round-table discussion to be broadcast on TV, December 10
- Broadcasting of a cartoon on UDHR on Mongol TV, December 11 and 12.
- 4. Dissemination of the UDHR text in "Ardyn Erkh", and "Onoodor"
- Publishing of the UDHR simplified version for children
- Training on, and dissemination of UDHR booklets to 109 UB schools
- 7. Dissemination of the UDHR booklets to all schools in the country
- Radio broadcasts on employment discrimination
- Amnesty International Big Book signing

For more information please call Ms.Uyanga at UNCHR at 321676. She can also be reached by email at unchrmon@magicnet.mn.

## NGOs GET KUDOS FOR RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Mongolia's Environmental Public Awareness Programme (EPAP), funded by UNDP with Dutch cost-sharing, singled out 22 environmental NGOs for awards during an October 16 event. The winners were recognised for their effective work on protecting Mongolia's increasingly threatened envi-

ronment. The programme, which has been running for two years, is expected to be extended another two years with support from the Dutch government through UNDP. The ceremony took place



in the biggest nomadic tent in the country, and was the culmination of 91 successfully implemented small projects. The event was also the launch of the Green Book, a collaboration of EPAP, the UNDP Mongolia Communications Office, the European Union's TACIS project and the Ministry of

Nature and Environment. The Green Book is a handbook for NGOs, outlining serious environmental problems and giving contact numbers and tips on how to solve these problems.

# UNDP Report makes major contribution to the understanding of poverty

In 1995 at the World Summit for Social Development, Governments declared their determination to eradicate poverty. This report looks at the progress that has been made since then and, in particular, at UNDP's involvement in poverty eradication strategies, programmes and projects.

The report notes that around one third of people in developing countries continues to live in "income poverty"-earning less than 1\$ per day. But it emphasises the importance of looking beyond income to address human poverty – the lack of essential human capabilities such as being literate, healthy and adequately nourished. It points out, for example, that in developing countries, about 30 per cent of all children under five are malnourished, and 38 per cent of all adult women are illiterate.

What is the international community doing to address both income and human poverty? The report includes the results of global survey to gauge the extent to which governments have been honouring the commitment they made at the Social Summit – estimate poverty, set targets to eradicate it and implement plans to do so.

Out of 130 countries covered, the survey

finds that 43 now have national poverty plans in place while 35 more address poverty explicitly within their national planning framework. But only 38 countries so far have set targets for eradication of extreme poverty.

The report welcomes the progress made to date, but stresses that it falls far short of what is needed. Not only do many more countries need to formulate plans to fight poverty - setting time-bound goals and targets – but they also need to translate plans into actions. Many countries have in the past made grand proclamations without delivering their promises. The same is true of the international community.

The attack on poverty in the years to come needs to be backed with real resources. Governments that are determined to eradicate poverty will need to consider both the magnitude and composition of public spending and how they can best use their resources to create the environment – political, economic and social – that can enable people to escape from poverty.

For the poorest countries, still burdened with demands to pay off debts, that will be

Continued on page 4

# **Up Close and Personal**

Ms. Erdenechimeg is a national United Nations Volunteer with the Poverty Alleviation Programme, funded jointly by the World Bank, UNDP and Sweden. There are now 42 national UNVs (NUNVs) working throughout Mongolia. There are currently four Mongolians serving as international UNVs around the world in Kyrgystan, Bhutan and Tajikistan. Any Mongolians interested in serving with UNV must contact the Ulaanbaatar UNV office. To serve outside of Mongolia, a second language is a must.

# When did you join PAPO and why did you want to be a national UNV?

I started my work in January 1997. At that time the project was just starting. I am working here as I think this is a new experience for Mongolia. First, I didn't have a clear vision of the output of these activities but now I have learned it.

# What are these activities, could you describe them?

Yes, initially the NUNVs were working only in three aimags and two regions, but currently they work in all aimags. All types of specialists are involved in these activities. I am specialising in monitoring and evaluation research work of the PAPO project. The monitoring of the project activities was introduced just starting from last year and now we are distributing all the manuals, indicators and brochures connected with monitoring and evaluation and conducting training on this subject. So, this will improve the efficiency of our work.

# Do you have leisure time and how do you spend it?

Unfortunately, there is not so much leisure time left after my work. I like sewing and reading scientific magazines, as I am an electronics engineer. But now I don't have time for these things.

Do you have a family?

Yes, I live with my husband and a child.
What is the principle you follow in your life?



Do the proper work, so that you would not regret afterwards about the results of your work.

#### Do you think that your work is useful and are there any results in real poverty alleviation?

Of course, I would even say that since the monitoring and evaluating system has been introduced the effectiveness of the project has increased considerably. People can evaluate the activities conducted on the project level and see what has been done and how and it can be improved. We always go to the countryside and can observe the changes which have occurred ourselves.

Are you satisfied with your work and what are your plans for the future?

I am very satisfied as I consider poverty alleviation as an important issue in today's Mongolia, and this work is for the benefit of all people living here. I don't have particular plans for the future, but I would like to become later on an international UNV and share my experiences with other people.

Do you have a dream?

 I would wish the number of poor and needy would be reduced.

#### News in a flash

Improving health services across Mongolia is an important goal for the UNDP-supported National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP). Ambulance services for rural communities have been seriously weakened in the past eight years of transition. Targeting in-need communities has meant that 86 sums or medium-sized towns now have new ambulances. The ambulances were funded by the International Development Association. A further 21 sums will receive ambulances before the end of the year. Ambulances in these communities take the form of the hardy Russian jeep, which makes up for what it lacks in comfort with its simple, easy-to-repair design. Other projects under the NPAP have trained 822 medical volunteers, rehabilitated 108 maternity hospitals and redecorated 24 sum hospitals. At the small town or bag level, 35 doctors were given jeeps.

F or many children in Mongolia, school means attending boarding schools at regional centres. With such a low population spread out over a vast territory - and many families working as nomadic herders - provision of educational services is a difficult task. Like other social services, education has faired poorly during the transition period, with governments unable to meet costs. The UNDP- and World Bank-supported Poverty Alleviation Programme Office has supported the upgrading of 69 boarding schools, with repairs to lighting and heating, installing solar power panels and establishing small, community schools. Over Tg 174.8 million was spent and 3,415 school dropouts were able to return to school.

Cooperation South is a new UNDP periodi cal that offers thoughtful debate and analysis on the major development issues facing Asian countries in the Southern hemisphere. While Mongolia is a North East Asian country, many of the issues discussed in Cooperation South also affect Mongolia. With stories like "Whose 'Model' Failed? Implications of the Asian Economic Crisis" and "Cultural Globalisations: Living on a Frontierless Land" by well-known writer Nadine Gordimer. The periodical's second issue is out and available in English at the UN Information Shop. It joins UNDP's colourful magazine about development, Choices. In English, Choices is produced by some of the world's top journalists and photojournalists and explores people's stories behind the development jargon.

## New CD-ROM details projects of UNFPA, UNESCO and UNDP

By L.Ariunaa, Information Manager, Information and Communication Technology for Sustainable Human Development Project

The first CD-ROM with information on the activities of the projects of UNFPA, UNESCO and UNDP is out. The CD-ROM has been

compiled with the assistance of the project staff of UNFPA, UNESCO and UNDP, and by Ms. A. Batchimeg of "ICT for SHD" project. Using Frontpage software, the information on CD-ROM has been defined as linked information, which makes it easier to find and browse.

There are websites of the Ministries and Government organizations connected to the Government Information Network. The CD-ROM has been pilot tested in Huvsugul and received very positive replies from the citizens. The people were ready

to spend hours browsing through the information it contained. The initial purpose of the CD-ROM is to supply Citizens Information Service Centers with information, created with the assistance of the Decentralization and Democracy Support and the Information and Communications Technology for Sustainable Human Development projects of UNDP.

If you have any information you would like to share with citizens, please contact <u>ariunaa@pmis.gov.mn</u> or <u>batchimeg@pmis.gov.mn</u> or phone: 323403. We are in the process of compiling the second CD and are looking for suggestions.

There are five existing CISCs in Mongolia - Ulaanbaatar city Mayor's of-

fice, Tuv aimag, Kharkhorin and Arvaikheer.

Within the framework of activities of "ICT for SHD" project, the project staff had conducted a number of training courses for staff of Governor's office and citizens of Uvurkhangai, Dornogovi and Huvsgul aimags. Besides that, in August, the project began publishing the "ICT" newsletter, which contains information about the activities of the project, information on the Government information network status and their connectivity to the Government Information Network.

In November, "Decentralization and Democracy support" and "ICT for SHD" projects are planning to connect the governors offices of Dundgovi, Huvsgul and Khovd aimags and establish Citizens Information Service Centers at these aimags as well. The main objective of the CISC is to establish a new way to facilitate the communication between governors' offices and the citizens.



# **Understanding poverty**

#### Continued from page 3

difficult. Sub-Saharan Africa pays over 14 per cent of export earnings in debt service, and South-Asia pays 22 per cent. Thus the bilateral and multilateral creditors have a major responsibility to cancel or dramatically cut the debts they are owed.

their goals. The international community also has a vital contribution to make through aid. The report points out that this has now shrunk to just 0.22 per cent of aggregate industrial country GDP – a far cry from the UN target of 0.7 per cent.

Even with donor assistance, however, the report argues that the eradication of poverty cannot rely on the efforts of central governments alone. They can provide a leadership but this must be combined with the active participation of a coalition of regional and local governments involving civil society organisations and the private sector.

But the driving force of such coalition must be the poor themselves – who have the strongest motivation and the greatest stake in the outcome. Systems governments need to be sufficiently decentralised, open and transparent so that they can respond

to their priorities. And poor communities need to be able to mobilise and organise themselves to achieve

UNDP has become increasingly involved in anti-poverty programmes. Around 50 per cent of total resources now go to country level programmes that can have a direct impact on poverty – through improved livelihoods, greater gender equality, better natural resource management and governance that is more democratic. UNDP is involved at every level. It supports a broad range of community programmes where the emphasis now is on so-



cial mobilisation – and on helping the poor to build livelihoods that are viable and sustainable. But the UNDP is also involved at the national level assisting, for example, with the preparation of anti-poverty programmes.

Just as important, the organisation is trying to ensure much stronger links between actions at the micro and macro levels. This means not just assuring that macro-policies reduce poverty at the local level but also that micro successes are used as foundation to reform macro policies.

In its environmental programmes, for example, UNDP emphasises that the poor, who

have the most to gain from conserving natural resources, should be supported to become the main stewards of environmental regeneration.

Clarifying how environmental degradation disproportionately affects the poor is, for UNDP, part of much broader effort that includes linking poverty eradication to good governance and equity. Human poverty is the result of a whole set of interesting inequalities – social, political, and economic.

One of the most important of these involves gender. Inequalities between men and women serve to generate and perpetuate poverty both within and between generations. Gender biases need to be removed at every level – from fiscal policy to the sharing the household responsibility – if there is to be any prospect of poverty eradication.

The report argues that the best way to make this happen is to tackle poverty with a broad range of policies. Poverty is not a sectoral issue. It is not a social problem to be addressed as an afterthought. Poverty eradication must, rather, become a central, guiding objective of all development efforts. Fundamentally, poverty is an affront to human rights. Good health, adequate nutrition, literacy and employment at are not favours or acts of charity to be bestowed on a poor by governments and international agencies. They are human rights, as valid today as they were 50 years ago when the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted.

The international community, including the UN system, can help fully establish poverty eradication as a priority. And UNDP is striving to play an important role, following the impetus provided by the ongoing UN reforms, to enable the UN system to address poverty in a more coherent and effective way.

(This is an excerpt from the report Overcoming Human Poverty. Copies are available from the UN Information Shop)

## Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia \* Issue #9 \* October-November 1998

**Consolidating Notable Findings:** 

By Jerry van Mourik, Support Officer to the United Nations Resident Coordinator

## **United Nations Field Trip**

The UN Country Team members traveled together to Khentii aimag last month. For the second time this year, representatives from all UN agencies in Mongolia and some of their colleagues from the Ministries of External Relations, Health & Social Welfare and Finance traveled together, out of the city, to get a feel of what's going on in the country side. The trip triggered great enthusiasm for continuos cooperation and coordination among UN family

The UN/Government team visited several

projects and held discussions with local officials, citizens and project staff in several soums, Tsenkhermandal, Umnudelger, Bayankhutag and the aimag centre. It got updated on community-based approaches to primary education, reproductive health issues and health information services, vulnerable groups organizations' projects, the BAMAKO revolving drug fund initiative and the eastern steppe biodiversity project.

As part of consolidating notable findings and the follow-up, connections are being intensified through the UN Theme Groups on HIV/ AIDS, youth, gender, food security & nutrition, human rights and social statistics.

UN Pays Tribute to Slain Minister - The United Nations Country Team expressed deep condolences to the Government and people of Mongolia in connection with the tragic death of Mr. Sanjaasurengiin Zorig, leader of Mongolia's democratic reform process, member of Continued on page 6

## **MONGOLIA UN Thematic Working Groups** (updated on 26 October 1998)

Agencies/Groups	Youth	Social Statistics	HIV/AIDS	Gender	Human Rights	Food Security and Nutrition
UNDP	Ms. Pie Meulenkamp	Mr. Bruno Pouezat	Ms. Meulenkamp	Ms. Sarantuya	Mr. Tserendorj	Mr. Batkhuyag
UNICEF	Mr. Girvin Ms. Oyunsaihan	Mr. Tanada	Mr. Girvin	Ms. Uranchimeg (2)	Ms. S. Tuul	Mr. Girvin (3)
WHO	Dr. Reijo Salmelar	Dr. Reijo Salmelar	Dr. De Silva	Ms. Byambaa	Dr. Reijo Salmelar	Mr. Reijo Salmelar
UNFPA	Ms. B. Bayarmaa	Mr. Monwar Islam (1)	Mr. Monwar Islam	Ms. Miga	Ms. B. Bayarmaa Ms. Myaga	Ms. Bayarmaa
UNCHR	Ms. Uyanga	Ms. Uyanga	Ms. Uyanga	Ms. Uyanga	Ms. Uyanga	
UNESCO	Ms. Linken Nymann	Ms. Linken Nymann	*	F 1 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	Ms. Nymann	
World Bank						Mr. Richard Lynn Ground
IMF						
UNV	Ms. Lynne Nyung Sein			Ms. Lynne Nyung Sein	Ms. Lynne Nyung Sein	1 11 11 11 11

#### Email addresses UN Theme Group Members:

**YOUTH** – meulenkamp@undp.org.mn odendevnorov@unicef.org mgirvin@unicef.org wrmog@magicnet.mn bayarmaa@undp.org.mn U-Nies@nagicnet.mn Lynne@undp.org.mn

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HIV/AIDS - meulenkamp@undp.org.mn mgirvin@unicef.org wrmog@magicnet.mn monwar@undp.org.mn unchrmon@magicnet.mn

GENDER - sarantuya@undp.org.mn ubudragchaa@unicef.org wrmog@magicnet.mn miga@undp.org.mn unchrmon@magicnet.mn lynne@undp.org.mn

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FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION - batkhuyag@undp.org.mn mgirvin@unicef.org wrmog@magicnet.mn bayarmaa@undp.org.mn lground@worldbank.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UNITED NATIONS THEME GROUPS: MR. JERRY VAN MOURIK, UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR SUPPORT OFFICER, MOURIK@UNDP.ORG.MN TELEPHONE: 327585.

## **UN Field Trip**

Continued from page 5

State Great Hural and Acting Minister of Infrastructure. An official UN message was sent to the State Great Hural and Government of Mongolia. It said that "the United Nations stands prepared to support the Government and people of Mongolia in their endeavors to promote democracy, sound governance and human development – the causes that Mr. S. Zorig so consistently stood for."

Macro-Economics – The World Bank joined the recent IMF Mission to Mongolia. The mission observed the macro-economic situation, reviewed both the financial system and the 1998 budget of the Government and looked ahead to 1999. An important overall observation was that the Government is facing tough decisions on prioritizing expenditures.

Follow-up to UN Conferences Organized – The Regional Ministerial Consultation in Bangkok, later in November this year, about the follow-up to the UN Summit on Children (New York-1990), is being organized by UNICEF. The Mongolian Government (three ministers to

be confirmed: Health, Education and Justice) will join the UNICEF team to Thailand. There is concern in Mongolia on school dropouts and malnutrition. Upon return the mission will provide feedback for the One World UN Conference Series in Mongolia, enabling the organizers to incorporate the notable Bangkok-findings into the preparations for the first One World on Children, in Ulaanbaatar (20-23 No-



Thousands mourned the death of Mongolia's democracy leader, S. Zorig.

vember 1998). The UN Theme Group on Youth is heavily involved as well. The UN is currently mapping out Mongolia's follow-up to the UN Summits agreements (New York/Children, Vienna/Human Rights, Rio de Janeiro/Environment, Cairo/Population, Beijing/Women and Copenhagen/Social Development and Rome/World Food Summit).

Support for Poverty Eradication - The month of October 1998 was again Poverty Eradication Month. The Poverty Eradication Program (PAPO) organized a series of activities, supported by the Government, the United Nations and several NGOs. The United Nations specifically supported public awareness campaigns to the causes of poverty in the country, and called for strong support for people dealing with poverty in their daily lives. Clearly the Poverty Eradication Month interacted with the UN's socio-economic policy exercise. An interesting book on poverty, causes and remedies has been launched and the World Bank published two interesting reports on the current status of the financial sector and the informal sector in Mongolia. Copies of the report can be ordered through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

## The Memorandum of Understanding on Youth issues: Empowering Mongolia

By Julie Schneiderman, National Youth Coordinator

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Youth Issues in July 1998, the Government of Mongolia and the UN Agencies have been eager to begin to implement it. Therefore, when I arrived from Vancouver, Canada three weeks ago to assume the position of National Youth Coordinator, there was little time for jet lag. With only six months to achieve my goals and with plenty of work awaiting me, I quickly moved into an office in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare -Department of Women, Family and Youth Affairs to work under the direction of Mr. Tumurbaatar, Chairman of the Department. Through the assistance of experienced counterparts, including a translator hired to assist with MOU activities, I began setting up meetings with everyone in Ulaanbaatar involved in youth activities related to the MOU. I am thrilled with the positive responses, enthusiasm and strong willingness for cooperation on MOU youth activities from the Mongolian Government, UN Agencies and NGOs.

The MOU on Youth Issues presents so many opportunities to build exciting links between all types of organizations in Mongolia. The recognition and understanding of existing commitments both within the government and the UN System will allow MOU activities to

better address the issues of young people. Essentially, the MOU on Youth Issues serves as a recipe for empowering Mongolian youth, with the success of its implementation based on a colourful blend of ingredients.

The crafters and drafters of the MOU on Youth intended for the document to make a true impact on the lives of youth in Mongolia. Together with my counterparts in the Department of Youth, I am setting up links and building partnerships between youth related organizations and agencies. Our main goal is to bring life to the words of the MOU and to the set of four priorities established by the UN Theme group on Youth and the Government of Mongolia:

- To create a needs assessment analysis of youth with a focus on social statistics;
- To provide youth with a range of capital tools to fight youth poverty and unemployment;
- To provide training tools for youth to improve youth employment opportunities;
- To link with existing reforms in restructuring curriculum and educational materials.

Some initiatives we are currently working on in the Department of Youth - with continual support from the United Nations - include the development of a series of seminars for youth workers from the UN Agencies, NGOs and the



Government. These seminars will aim to create standards on youth programming and publications, generate ideas for fundraising and most importantly to foster a forum for open lines of communica-

tion. We are in the process of establishing a law school curriculum advisory board made up of students and professionals, to assist the efforts of UNCHR (the human rights agency) on the development of new educational materials for law students. Other proposals include the marketing of the UNDP Microcredit projects to youth, through partnerships with the MicroStart Project, its implementing NGOs and youth organizations like the Youth Federation.

All of the UN Agencies are committed to the development of a National Youth Internship Programme, which would provide unemployed and underemployed youth with the opportunity to gain marketable job skills. We have met with UNESCO (culture, education and science)to discuss building upon their non-formal distance education projects and with UNICEF (children) to build a partnership with their projects for youth. UNFPA (reproduc

Continued on page 8

## Just around the corner – what do people think about the UN?

On October 20 the Blue Sky Bulletin decided to do an informal survey of people on the street to gauge their attitudes and opinions towards the United Nations. And we thought, "what better place to do this than on the very street that houses two UN offices!"

It seemed like a simple enough yet appealing endeavour to conduct, on a sunny, albeit chilly autumn afternoon - a purely unscientific, coincidental and impromptu poll. Seven men and women were interviewed, with three out of the 14 interviewed claiming to know nothing at all about the UN. One man in his forties said he had just come to Ulaanbaatar from the countryside and had never heard of such an organisation. Nevertheless, here is what the rest of the interviewees had to say:

#### Oyun-erdene, (F) 23, student at the Mongolian National University

"Information in Mongolia about UN activities is lacking and as a result, Mongolians don't know about them. I cannot say what I think about the UN because I don't know much about the workings of this organisation in Mongolia."

## Married couple, Tsetsegmaa, 49, housewife and Dashtsevsg, 50, retired army captain

"We appreciate the activities of the UN because they foster peace throughout the world. UNDP in Mongolia has addressed many important is-



sues like women's rights, through their projects – in the Gobi, for example, there are communities which benefit from projects based on women-centred activities. There, Mongolian media offers a lot of information on the UN. Mongolia needs UN assistance to counter environmental disasters, such as forest fires."

#### Enkhe, (M) 40, translator/interpreter

"The UN prioritises development issues; it

sponsors several peace-keeping missions the world over; the activities of the UN are administered through its governing bodies like UNESCO and WHO. Here, in Mongolia, the UN is trying to help with building our nation, so that a reasonable standard of living can be achieved for all Mongolians. I don't know about specific projects sponsored by the UNDP in Ulaanbaatar. I suppose there are opposing opinions about the UN- for example, UN peacekeepers using brute force during a period of civil unrest somewhere in Africa. However, I think the UN is more effective compared to its forerunner, the League of Nations in the 1950s."

Editor's note: The League of Nations followed World War One; the United Nations was formed from the ashes of World War Two.

## Oyuna (F) 20, student at the Agricultural Institute

'I don't know much about the UN but I think it has some involvement in the effort to care for the street children of Ulaanbaatar. I think health is an important issue for the UN to tackle in Mongolia."

#### Name withheld, late 20s, Buddhist monk

"The UN is an international organisation which works to promote peace all over the world. The activities of the UNDP have been expanded to cover more of Mongolia ever since the start of the democratic period. Mongolia is a poor country that needs ongoing assistance from the UN."

#### Tuushinbileg (F) 17, student at the International Relations Institute

"The UN is a peace-keeping organisation. Its main functions are to alleviate poverty and unemployment. The UN is affiliated with the Red Cross- they work together to help the hungry and needy. I think UN activities are in big demand all over the world- I would like to see the UN involve more young people in its peace-keeping missions."

## Name withheld (M) mid-30s, construction worker

"I don't know anything about the UN, except that it is concerned with the protection of human rights."

#### Name withheld (F) early 40s, office worker

"I don't know what the UN is doing in Mongolia. I can tell, through the media that the UN is concerned with the protection of human rights – the humanitarian assistance provided by the UN is very much in demand all over the world."

#### Baatar (M) 31, topographic technician

"UNDP assists poor or developing nations – in Mongolia, it offers financial assistance to the government to carry out various projects. I feel that there is adequate information about the UN in the Mongolian media. I think, as for the projects funded by the UNDP, target groups are not reached- the people who should be helped are not helped and as a result, a lot of money is wasted. Such people don't receive any assistance; it often happens that those mediating on



the behalf of the UNDP benefit the most from the projects."

#### Daimaran (M) 68, cigarette vendor

"The UN provides humanitarian assistance to developing countries- it tries to bring about world unity. It is somehow related to the G-7



nations. In Mongolia, UN activities are based on progressive ideas, unlike those held by the Mongolian Revolutionary Party."

Research by Karen Fernandez and Ms. Bayarmaa

#### YOUTH ISSUES

Continued from page 7

tive health and family planning) has come to visit our office to discuss lending their support for MOU activities. We will work closely with them as well as WHO (health) to compile a comprehensive youth statistics protocol.

Each month, our office will be compiling a calendar of youth activities to send to all youth-related organizations. November 15th is our first deadline for submissions for the month of December. We will be contacting you for your input. If your list of youth dates is ready, please hand deliver or fax all submissions to UNDP to my attention, or feel free to come by our offices to visit or pick up a copy of the MOU on Youth in Mongolian or English. Our office is located on the 4th floor of the Youth Federation Building (next to the Technical University and across from Soros), Room #400, Tel: 328852

Cooperation between all organizations and agencies is essential for creating the momentum and energy necessary for the successful follow-up of the MOU on Youth Issues. It is already clear that through the MOU new relationships are developing.



A bounty of new newsletters: The poverty alleviation programme and One World join Blue Sky.

Even Ginger Spice thinks the UN is cool! Former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell is now UNFPA's goodwill ambassador.

## One world

Continued from page 1 the Mongolian language.

On October 8 One World youth volunteers met in the capital Ulaanbaatar to prep for the conferences. There was a poster contest, a disco and information sessions. Over 150 youth heard from UNICEF Information Officer Yuichi Tanada and UN Support Officer to the Resident Coordinator, Jerry van Mourik.

The first conference on children will kick-off on November 20 at the Nairamdel Children's Camp. One world is being supported by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office with assistance from the private sector and donors.

#### How to maximise One World

For UN programme and project staff, the conferences offer a significant boost to our work. Not only are they a forum for dissemination of information on our work in Mongolia – and more importantly a means to expand the educative reach of the UN - you can also:

- meet with the youth to develop contacts for future work;
- ask the youth to help with dissemination of

public education materials (ie: health book lets, newsletters, etc.) to remote areas of the country;

encourage youth to work with NGOs that

#### Conference Schedule:

Children – November 20 to 23 Human Rights – December 7 to 10 Population and Development – January, 1999 Social Development – February, 1999 Women and Development – April, 1999 National Summit – May, 1999

work with the UN; How to contact One World:

One World has a fact-packed homepage in English and Mongolian located at the UN Homepage <a href="http://www.un-mongolia.mn">http://www.un-mongolia.mn</a>. Emails can be sent to <a href="mailto:OneWorld@magicnet.mn">OneWorld@magicnet.mn</a>.

Newsletter "Neg Ertonts" or One World.

The conference series is being organised by Women for Social Progress and the contacts are:

One World Coordinators: Susan Boedy (she speaks Mongolian!) or R. Burmaa

Address: National History Museum Room #04

Tel: 976-1-312171 or 976-1-322340 Fax: 976-1-322340

One World radio programme: Every Friday at 3 pm on 107.5 FM

#### Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia \* Issue #9 \* October-November 1998

## **Does Mongolia face corruption?**

By Maralgoo, BSkyB Reporter

The process of democracy that started in 1989-1990 has developed valuable things of human rights, freedom and market economy. And these tremendous changes mark a key point in the history of Mongolia. For our country that has for so long been isolated, democracy brought us new things and the free flow of information. The new freedoms have also brought their bad side, with increases in criminal activity. This tendency has happened in every transition country, and can cause social, economic, and political crisis that can lead to corruption.

Even though everybody talks about corruption, it is harder to pin down what it is. On April, 1997 hunger-strikers were against the activities connected to corruption of the opposition and the democrats, and those demonstrations have become a clarion call for people on this issue. Even though there is no proof that high government officials are corrupt, it is an issue that has become paramount in the political debate, and is playing its role in the current political paralysis.

Tsolmon's famous debt case, the court procedure of five bank officers, the gold dealer case, illegal transfer of Nalaih army weapons across the border, the incident of 17 containers of alcohol, the problems concerning Erdenet copper mining company - all these frightened society, but the real people are still hiding behind the curtains. For a country like Mongolia with few mechanisms to tackle this problem, corruption can cause enormous difficulties for economic reforms.

Is it true our lives have become smeared with corruption, causing social crisis, making people more anxious and an unstable society? Even though we are criticizing somebody being corrupted, can we turn back the "payoff gift" which was given by others? We are citizens and belong to one country. Therefore, it is the time for everybody, starting from ordinary people to civil servants, to stand against corruption.

It is necessary for us to develop the national program against corruption.

Although, Konrad Adenauer foundation conducted a survey on corruption in four aimags in 1994, it was not sufficient to look at overall picture throughout the country. In order to avoid expected danger of corruption, the government of Mongolia asked UNDP for assistance in solving the problem, and accordingly, several specialists are working on the problem. Therefore, the Government of Mongolia together with UNDP is working on developing and implementing an anti corruption project. It's necessary to reflect activities that would eliminate people's misunderstanding over the causes of corruption and how it can exasperate the pov-

It is necessary to strengthen corruption-related legislation. There is no single person that has been prosecuted for corruption due to weak laws and regulations on corruption. The law should be used against those involved in corruption; that civil servants must follow the law otherwise face serious consequences for for their actions. Corruption exists in every country and they should take actions to prevent corruption. In 1999, UNDP is planning to send a study group to Hong Kong and Singapore to conduct survey on corruption.

It is important that the Government has the policy that would focus not on just one group of people, but all people standing against corruption and cooperate with the country that have experience dealing with corruption.

There is no country without corruption. But it's rare countries that have been corrupted fully like Nigeria. Corruption simply became a part of every day life, the legislation no longer can deal with it, and the national crisis became more severe.

Mongolia is not experiencing the same as Nigeria, yet. If there are no immediate actions against corruption, Mongolia may become Asian Nigeria.

Do you really want to see your country fallen in such situation?

## Latest news from UN Mongolia website.

The UN Mongolia website is enriching its content day by day.

Most of the visitors are coming from USA, Japan, Australia, Finland and of course Mongolia. The top day with 52 visitors was on 6 October, 1998. Since April 1998 the total number of pageviews reached 4,307 visitors.

We are receiving email from Web site visitors throughout the world and have greatly expanded the distribution of our publications. More and more people are starting to use it on the Web.

We are also an award-winning site. Recently our online magazine "Ger" was voted by Starting Point users to be a "Hot Site". Starting Point is a web site that allows you to search the Internet.

Our site has also been listed on the People's Choice WebSite 500 and awarded CyberTeddy's Top 500 WebSite award. Happy Browsing!

МХТ Мэдээлэл Холбооны Технологи ICT Information and Communication Technology

## **Internet Summit: Gathering on the cyber steppes**

Work is underway on organising an Internet Summit for Mongolia. The Summit will promote the opportunities offered by information mote the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies in Mongolia. The Summit will be a first for Mongolia, as a publicly accessible event. It is hoped the Summit will share lessons from other developing countries, discuss possibilities for Mongolian enterprises and individuals and analyse Mongolian successes to date. It is hoped an ICT blueprint will chart the course for future developments in Mongolia. From November 17 to 21 a workshop will lay the groundwork for the Summit. The ICT Summit is being sponsored by UNDP and the Soros Foundation, with assistance from Mongolian companies (Datacom, Bodi, MTC and MTU). For further information please contact Atsushi Yamanaka, Information and Communication Technology Officer, UNDP.

## Food Security and Nutrition

Continued from page 1

memorandum. The MOU is a confirmation by these agencies and the Government to work together on this issue. The UN has already signed an MOU on Youth with the Government and will soon sign one on human rights. All three are priority areas for the Government.

Ajmal Qureshi, the FAO's Beijingbased representative for China, DPR Korea and Mongolia, noted that food security was an important issue to Mongolia, however its population was small.

He is confident the Government would manage any future hardships due to poor environmental conditions. "It is a very temporary problem," said Qureshi. "The situation is still pragmatic and inflation is under control." FAO is supporting food security and nutrition issues through its medium- and long-term projects on germplasms, food security, etc. He also pointed out the importance of animal production and the genetic quality of livestock. As well, he thinks the fishery can be a very successful industry in the country. He could not say what funds would be available in the future, and that the Asian financial crisis means other countries in the region are in need of support. It seems Mongolia will need to rely on some food imports, especially flour, he said. But the Government is still hoping that the country may recover by itself, harvesting the grain under the snow.

## Tackling corruption: A plan of action

Excerpted from a report by

Dr. Jon S.T. Quah, Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore (this story has been submitted by the Governance Programme and edited for the Blue Sky Bulletin)

Arising from my participation in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Workshop on Integrity in Governance in Asia in Bangkok from 29 June to 1 July 1998, and my experience in conducting research on corruption in Asian countries, particularly in Singapore, Hong Kong and the ASEAN countries, I was invited by UNDP's Programme for Accountability and Transparency (PACT) in New York to undertake a mission in Mongolia with the twofold aim of reviewing the current mechanisms for controlling corruption and recommending the national anti-corruption plan (NACP) for the Mongolian government.

During my first visit to Ulaanbaatar from 7-11 September 1998, I met Members of Parliament (MPs), senior officials from several agencies and mass media representatives. My second visit to Ulaanbaatar during 16-23 October gave me a chance to get a feedback on this preliminary report and finalise the NACP.

#### The National Anti-Corruption Plan

The proposed NACP consists of four related components: the national survey on the extent of corruption; the improvement of the implementation of existing laws, especially the LAC and the Criminal Code; a study tour of Singapore and Hong Kong to observe the operations of the CPIB and ICAC and the implementation of the POCA and POBO respectively with the aim of ascertaining the suitability of an independent ACA for Mongolia; and finally, convening a national workshop for senior Mongolian public officials, MPs, and other interested groups like mass media representatives and leaders of non-governmental organizations.

#### National Survey on the Extent of Corruption

As there is lack of relevant information on the extent of corruption in Mongolia, it is necessary for the government to conduct a nationwide survey to ascertain this. The Konrad Adenauer and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences conducted a poll on the public's views toward corruption in four provinces and published the results in the Mongolian press in August 1994. While this earlier poll provided useful information, its limited coverage of four provinces meant that the findings could not be applied to the other 14 provinces. The proposed national survey on corruption in Mongolia should be based on a larger and more representative sample of citizens in the 18 provinces. The key activities like the drawing of the random sample of citizens, the preparation of the questionnaire, and the training of the interviewers should be completed during the winter months of January to March 1999, so that interviews can be conducted during April 1999. Allowing one month for data analysis, the findings of the national survey could be presented at a national seminar for those policy-makers involved in the implementation of the anti-corruption measures in Mongolia in June 1999.

#### Improving the Implementation of Laws

As it will be expensive and politically not feasible for the Mongolian government to raise the low salaries of civil servants without substantial economic growth, a more realistic strategy would be to improve the effectiveness of the existing anti-corruption measures by ensuring the implementation and enforcement of laws. In fact, this was what the People's Action Party (PAP) government of Singapore did

In Mongolia, the problem of corruption has still not reached the epidemic proportions of Nigerian corruption. Whether Mongolia can avoid the same route taken by Nigeria depends mainly on the commitment of its political leaders and population in the fight against corruption.

in 1960, when it implemented its comprehensive anti-corruption strategy by strengthening the existing legislation. Salaries of civil servants were only increased from 1972 after the achievement of rapid economic growth (Quah, 1995: 398).

During my interview with Mrs C. Otgonbayar, MP and Chairperson, Standing Committee on Legal Affairs on September 8, 1998, she informed me that a working group had been formed to examine the implementation of the LAC. The report of this working group will be useful in terms of providing feedback on why after two and a half years of its introduction, no one has been prosecuted for corruption or for failing to submit or monitor an income and assets declaration yet.

It is interesting to note here that in her analysis of Mongolia's legal framework, Stephanie McPhail (1995: 22-23) observed that Mongolian laws were not only brief but also tend to be general, descriptive and vague. For example, no ministry is ever designated in a law as being responsible for that law's implementation. Many laws refer to institutions without setting them up. The senior policy-makers attending the seminar should bear this criticism of Mongolian laws in mind with the aim of introducing amendments to the existing anti-corruption legislation to enhance their implementation and effectiveness.

#### **National Workshop on Corruption**

This national workshop should be held after the completion of the national survey on coruption and the June 1999 national seminar to discuss its findings, the seminar for senior policy-makers to discuss the report of the working group on the implementation of the LAC, and the week-long study tour to Singapore and Hong Kong in July 1999. This means that the national workshop can be held in Ulaanbaatar in August or September 1999.

As the purpose of this national workshop is to discuss the desirability and feasibility of a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy for Mongolia, it is necessary to involve all the relevant policy-makers and key representatives of the academic community, the business community, the mass media, and the non-governmental organizations. More specifically, the findings of the national survey, the report of the working group, and the report of the study tour of Singapore and Hong Kong should be presented and discussed at the national workshop.

The GIPPAG should be responsible for organizing the national workshop on corruption with the assistance of the UNDP office in Ulaanbaatar, PACT, and if necessary, TI. The papers presented at the national workshop and the discussions can be published and its policy recommendations submitted to the Mongolian government for consideration.

#### Conclusion

In his critical analysis of Nigeria's problems, Babatunde Oyinade (1998: 21) attributed the persistence of these problems to corruption, which has reached an uncontrollable level as it has been institutionalized in the government and private sector. He wrote:

There is corruption in every society, but the problem of corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria that there is difficulty in knowing precisely how to address the issue. ... in Nigeria the problems exists because of the inability of the government to investigate and bring to justice anyone considered guilty. Most government agencies have become business centers where corruption is so rampant that legitimate work canot be accomplished without paying off someone. No one is exempt, not the military, the civil servants, the business elites, the politicians, or society at large. Everyone does it. It is part and parcel of daily life in Nigeria. Unless Nigerians cease to justify corruption as normal, efforts to eradicate it will fail. Poverty remains the vehicle for corruption.

In Mongolia, the problem of corruption has still not reached the epidemic proportions of Nigerian corruption. Whether Mongolia can avoid the same route taken by Nigeria depends mainly on the commitment of its political leaders and population in the fight against corruption.

There is hope if they are willing to pay the price required for minimizing corruption by implementing a comprehensive strategy which reduces both the incentives and opportunities for corruption. However, if such political will is lacking it will be quite difficult to prevent corruption from gradually becoming a way of life in Mongolia in the future.

Internal Newsletter of UNDP's Partnership for Progress in Mongolia \* Issue #9 \* October-November 1998

# Time management tips for dedicated people with demanding schedules

By Fred Pentney

#### Stage one: Developing business persona, efficient work environment and effective thinking strategies

- Time management is not an occasional seminar it is a continuous process which requires self-discipline to maintain
- The process also requires a self-improvement attitude, specific knowledge, tools and resources
- Take an inventory. Do you review your personal performance, use a planner, have "quick find" filing?
- Change habits by practicing, e.g. saying "no", until you get caught up and can plan ahead.
  - Set specific time aside weekly to acquire and use the tools and develop the resources the return on your "time investment" will gradually compound into time that generates income.

## Stage two: Select and finish a few key projects, don't overload, stay focused.

- If you have multiple priorities, work in hour "chunks" in each area. Then repeat on key items
- Use technology to leverage your time, but, spend hobby or personal time researching and learning the technology. Avoid using project time to learn software take courses whenever possible.
- Make list of your personal time wasters write them down as they occur, review them, and rectify.
- Develop a comprehensive, ongoing data base write or use computer. Post every week while information is fresh.
- Schedule fitness time no matter how busy you get. 45 minute work-

- outs, 2-3 times a week.
- If you make commitments to people keep them, or communicate the exchanges early, never late.

## Stage three: Be professional in all things, use ethics, give value, keep learning and stretching.

- The stage three development areas will all have a positive impact on your time if entrenched as habits.
- Have fingertip control of all your data, files, contacts, projects. Use file folders and electronic aids.
- Spend 15-30 minutes a day planning daily and long range activities. Involve others in the execution.
- Take time out to stay balanced: family, social, and recreational activities make the business effort worth while. A rich life comes from more that just money. Being able to give back is a value-added benchmark.

## Overview: If you develop connectivity between all the above your system will be easier to maintain

Recognise that all of the above are "tips" of the iceberg. There is
considerable amount of work necessary on each of the items. The
benefits of maintaining the effort are: you develop a high level of
professional accomplishment, you are in control and cope well under stress and consistently achieve worthwhile goals.

Many thanks to Fred Pentney for allowing us to reprint these tips

Cut and keep page

# UN Homepage: Making the most of electronic publishing

By Bayasgalan, UN Webmaster

The Web has been called the most important business and sales tool of the 1990s. Despite some over-inflated promotion by some companies, the World Wide Web continues to amaze even the most pessimistic observers. Although traditional media - radio and TV broadcasts, printed books, magazines, and newspapers will continue to be important to our lives, more and more of our friends and associates will receive information from the World Wide Web. For development workers the World Wide Web is becoming an invaluable tool. In Mongolia there are now over 100 homepages and over 2,000 Internet users. There are over ten public access Internet centres (five in the capital, five outside). Despite these impressive accomplishments, for many that don't have their own access to the Internet, it can be difficult to see its relevance to every day life. For those with Internet, its use in Mongolia has its own frustrations and disappointments. A common scenario is the frustrated surfer who spends half an hour trying to log on to the Internet during the business day, only to be kicked off five minutes later while downloading their favourite page. But despite this drawback, the Internet offers an unparalleled range of informat1ion not found in libraries or archives in this country.

The following are tips that might help hesitant Internet users in the UN. Keep in mind that the UN's own homepage is for the use of all UN programmes and projects, so don't be shy!

There are several reasons for using the Web:

#### Immediacy

The web makes it easy to get your message out as quickly as possible. After you have added, deleted, or updated the information at your website, it takes just seconds to post your website. Often by the time the newsletter or direct mailer arrives in somebody's mailbox, the information is out of date.

For example, when your boss or a member of the media calls and wants to know what you have done, instead of stopping work and preparing a presentation kit for him/her and sending it via overnight express service or email attachment (which sometimes fails to reaching the intended receiver), you can simply refer them to the website (in our case it is http://www.un-mongolia.mn).

People interested in your activities can quickly order publications online or download the agendas of your seminars. Many of our donor partners have commented on the benefits of being able to quickly review the UN's activities in Mongolia – and developments in the country.

Volume of information

The web permits you to communicate as much information as you need to achieve your goals. On the web, costs do not increase as the amount of information you communicate increases.

This is in direct contrast to print publishing where printing costs increase proportionately to the amount of information. The homepage becomes a valuable electronic archive of your activities and storehouse for information. At UNDP this homepage has been incorporated into what is called an office Intranet, similar to the Internet but only available for UNDP staff. The one proviso is this: organize the information and prioritise. There is nothing worse than a homepage that immediately overloads a user with lengthy reports.

#### Personalised information

The web is an interactive medium, which means that visitors to your website can concentrate on just those topics of interest to them. The web permits you to offer something for every visitor.

What are our visitors saying?

"My school and other schools in the state of Missouri are in a group called Model UN. It is run by one of the colleges in Missouri, and our purpose is to find out information on countries in the United Nations and then we go to a set up debate that is somewhat the same as the real United Nations meetings). Anyway, I was just writing to tell you that I think your site was very helpful in giving information that

Continued on page 12

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### **Internet**

Continued from page 11

helps us know more about what you do in the UN. Thank you for your time (sic)." Erin Link, USA

"I would be grateful for introductions to Mongolian companies or other organizations in-

## **Upcoming events**

Governance and Economic Transition

- MON/95/101 Workshop on Quality insurance Mechanism for Management Training Programmes beginning of Dec'98
- Mon/97/123 National Summit on Press Law, December
- Mon/97/122 beginning December, National Summit on Information and Communication Technology
- Dundgovi, Hovd, Huvsgul Citizen Information Service Centre will open in December

Resident Coordinator's Office

One World UN Conference Series

- October 24-25 1998, Training of Facilitators
- Oct 31- 1-1998, Nov Aimag Committee Coordinators
- November 2—23, 1998, Children's Conference
- December 7-10, 1998, Human Rights
- January 20-23 1999, Population & Development
- February 26-28 1999, Social Development
- May 14-17 1999, National Summit

#### Environmen

- Organisation of a regional workshop on implementation of the AAPs and MAP 21 in Tuv aimag, 10 November
- Organisation of a regional workshop on implementation of the APPs and MAP 21 in Arkhangai, 20 November
- Organisation of a consultation among women NGOs and government officials on national programme of action for the advancement of women, 15 November
- Organisation of a seminar on project preparation, end of November

#### Arrivals and Departures

Ms. Beatriz Chua and Mr. Kwangkoo Choi, UNV Programme Officers, have concluded their contracts and returned home; Ms. Lynne Nyunt Sein from Myanmar is the new UNV Programme Officer; Ravi Bagshi, an Indian UNV will work as a Human Development Research Specialist on the 1999 Mongolian Human Development Report; Maya Totorova, an English teacher will return to her native Bulgaria; Jajdish Yadav, an Indian UNV will work with UNFPA on population development strategies; National UNV Coordinator Enkhbayar will work in the PAPO office; UNDP M. Enkhsetseg, UNDP Programme Assistant in the Programme Support Unit will take up a posting as a UNV in Tajikistan, with temporary posting in Uzbekistan, until things quiet down in the troubled Central Asian nation.

terested in promoting economic development in Mongolia", Prof. R.E. Shaw, Italy.

"I visited in your homepage and it was valuable site for people who is accessing outside of Mongolia. I am appreciated that a lot of work done by UNDP in Mongolia (sic)," Baatar, Fellow in Medical Informatics, Harvard

"I was very disappointed to find your "up-todate" information on the economy a year old. Still, I find your site very interesting and hope to find some more "up-to-date's" in the near future," Oyu Ochirbal-Bravenec, MBA student at the US Business School in Prague.

"I found this Mongolian AIDS Bulletin and was quite surprised. I was born in Mongolia and by coincidence I have now a company that develops affordable AIDS drugs for the third world. Is there a way to help? How many AIDS cases are there?," Bourinbaiar Aldar, private business, USA.

Color and Photography

Print color is notoriously expensive. The Web, however, doesn't care about color. It costs no more to publish a color photograph on the Web than a black-and-white one.

Low cost.

Web publishing is inexpensive. Therefore it allows small businesses to compete with large businesses and produce Web sites that are as attractive and meaningful as firms with huge advertising budgets. The burden is on you, however, to determine your message, provide the information your market desires, and present it as attractively as possible.

So never underestimate the power of the Web. If you have a business and want it to grow to its fullest and most profitable potential, the Web is the way to go. The Web is here to stay, and whether your primary market is across the town or across the country – or even overseas, you can and should be using the Web. The Soros Foundation in Ulaanbaatar has now an Open Web Centre for the general public. They can provide advice and support on creating homepages.



Нэгдсэн Үндэстний Байгууллагын United Nations Mongolia Мэдээллийн төв Info Shop

## List of new publications and reports

#### In English

- Overcoming Human Poverty. A comprehensive survey of global poverty based on human development reports since 1990, UNDP, 1998
- 2. The Art Yearbook 1998. Asia-Pacific Tele-community
- 3. Empowering People: Guide to Participation. UNDP, 1998
- 4. Country Economic Review: Mongolia. ADB, 1998
- 5. Trade and Development Report. UNCTAD, 1998
- 6. Foreign Direct Investment, Trade, Aid and Migration. UNCTAD/ IOM, 1996
- 7. Renewable Energy for Mongolia. Proposal made to UNDP, 1998
- 8. Development Aid: What the Public Thinks. 1998
  - D. Lake Hovsgol National Park: A Visitor's Guide. Discovery Initiatives, UK/ UNDP Biodiversity Project, 1998

#### In Mongolian

- About HIV/AIDS/STDs: The Handbook. UNAIDS (UN Programme on HIV/AIDS/STDs), 1998
- 11. Таны мэдвэл зохих зүйлүүд XB болон ДОХ-ын талаар. НҮБ-ын ДОХ-той тэмцэх нэгдсэн хөтөлбөр
- The Green Book: An Environmental Awareness Handbook. A joint publication of EPAP, the UNDP Communications Office, TACIS and the Ministry of Nature and Environment, October 1998

We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Buletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is September 20.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are free! We can send the newsletter to you electronically, via e-mail, or by post. Just send us your address and how you would like to receivethe newsletter and we will rush it out straight away.

All submissions must be sent to the Communications Office, UNDP, 7 Erkhuu St., Ulaanbaatar, PO Box 49/207.
Telephone: (976-1) 321539.
Fax: (976-1) 326221.
E-mail: dsouth@undp.org.mn Please check out the United Nations Homepage at http://www.un-mongolia.mn



#### Blue Sky Bulletin

#### News in a flash

Tragedy has struck the Eastern steppe gazelles.A survey conducted by UNDP's Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia Project in November has discovered between 80 and 90 per cent of the 1998 Gazelle calves have died. There were also low numbers of yearlings (1997 calves) in the population and correspondingly high numbers of dead yearlings among the carcasses. The cause has been traced to an outbreak of "foot rot" or necrovateris, a bacterial disease resulting from heavy rainfall in July and August. The disease causes a gangrenelike condition that produces toxins and prevents the animals from walking and feeding. The virtual loss of all the 1997 and 1998 calves will have an impact on the structure of the gazelle population for years to come. Some of the adults were in poor condition in November, even before the stresses of the rot and pregnancy, and it can be expected that mortality will be higher than normal over the winter. The Mongolian government has decided not to issue permits for commercial hunting of gazelle this winter.

UNDP is helping journalists to help when disaster strikes. As of January 1, 1999 the Mongolian government divested itself of all of its media interests under a new law. This has profound implications for the dissemination of information in Mongolia, especially during a crisis. In preparation for this, UNDP's Support to Community-based Rehabilitation of Forest Areas and Disaster Management Project has prepared a disaster management handbook for journalists. The pocket-size booklet was prepared by the State Emergency Commission and gives journalists directions on what to do and who to contact in case of a disaster. The idea first emerged from a disaster roundtable meeting between the State Emergency Commission and local journalists on October 8. Journalists interested in getting a copy of the booklet should drop by the UN Info Shop in Ulaanbaatar or phone 325911.

The new year means it's time to clean the house and make - or break - new year's resolutions. Around the world UN workers know the new year is report-writing time. A necessary task it may be, it can also be a frustrating experience - even for veterans. On the plus side it is an opportunity to dust off the old versions of our handy project guide book (Mongolian and English), and take a peek inside. New for 1999, The Guide has the latest information on active UNDP projects and is essential information for anybody interested in development in Mongolia. Copies can be picked up at the UN Info Shop.

# Big support for rights in Big Book

"To be denied human rights is far harder than being born disabled." Just one of many comments written by Mongolians in Amnesty International's Big Book. Amnesty International is a global human rights NGO with branches in most countries. Signatures and comments were collected from across Mongolia as part of a global campaign and Mongolians were able to meet the target of one per cent of the population (25,000 signatures).

The Big Book was presented to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Paris on December 10th, World Human Rights Day. On that same day Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Human Rights with the UN - an affirmation by both sides that they remain committed to the goals of the Universal Charter on Human Rights.

## Delegates for the Hague Forum from Mongolia:

Mr. Sodov <u>Sonin</u> Minister for Health and Social Welfare

Ms.Sanjaasuren Oyun Member of Parliament

Mr. Sanjbegz <u>Tumur-Ochir</u> Member of Parliament

Mr.Jamiyan <u>Batsuuri</u> National Center for Anthropology

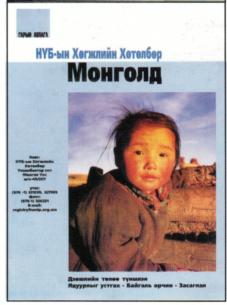
Ms. J. <u>Chanchaldulam</u> Officer, Women for Social Progress

Ms. Norjinlkham <u>Mongolmaa</u> Chief, International Department, MHSW

Mr.Gombo <u>Zoljargal</u> Journalist, Mongol TV



The books are on display at the UN Info Shop in Ulaanbaatar before being passed on to New York.

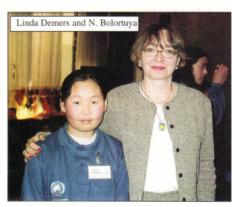


The Guide (above) is available in Mongolian and English from the UN Info Shop.

## **UN Population Fund gets new boss**

The Mongolia office of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) now has its first Representative to the country. Canadian Linda Demers started work on December 15 and takes over from the Beijing-based office that used to oversee Mongolia.

Hailing from Montreal, she is a demographer by training, with a BA in Anthropology. In 1979, she worked in Burkina Faso as a Chief Technical Adviser on a UNFPA population and development project. She went back to Canada and worked for four years in the Secretary of Stateresponsible for policy and research programmes on youth, ethnic/linguistic minorities, family and disabled people. She returned to international development as the population advisor in the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), where she was responsible for all population and development issues and activities in CIDA. Wanting to be in



the field, Ms. Demers joined UNFPA in 1992 and was UNFPA Representative in Vietnam and in Ethiopia. Ms. Demers is extremely happy to be the first full-fledged UNFPA Representative in Mongolia.

## Women scientists prove potency of Mongolian beverage

Cheered by findings: Ms. Amarsanaa, Ms. Urtnasan, Ms. Alimaa Ph.D from MONENZYME(Mongolia) with Korean counterparts Mr.Do-Young Yoon and Ms. Sue Nie Park from Korean Women's Development Institute.

Horse mare's milk, drunk by Mongolians for centuries, has been proven by a team of women scientists to be as healthy as many Mongolians believe. In a UNDP-funded project, women scientists from Mongolia, China and South Korea are exploring new ways to generate income through science. A joint Mongolian/ Korean team confirmed the national wisdom of using mare's milk for treating stomach and intestine inflammations, as well as tuberculosis, liver diseases and cancer. They say the frothy white milk is packed with nutriants and

vitamins.

The UNDP-funded Subregional Project of Northeast Asian Countries on Gender Equality through Science and Technology started last March. A team of Mongolian women scientists in the project made the discovery when they explored the biochemical composition and immunological activity

of Mongolian mare's milk.

Mongolians have used mare's milk as part of the traditional diet for centuries. During holidays many urban Mongolians drop in on their rural relatives for a drink of the elixir, saying it will help them to alleviate stress and heal some chronic diseases. There are

even cases of foreign tourists believing mare's milk is the elixir of life, and will make them younger.

The researchers confirmed that the drying

process of mare's milk does not adversely affect its nutritional value, including proteins, lipids, vitamins, lactose and fatty acids. The mare's milk was processed using spray drying

#### News in a flash

As Mongolia entered the transition period in the early 1990s, development assistance steadily increased to top US \$1.48 billion by 1997. The plethora of donor agencies and diplomatic missions in Mongolia has led to concerns over the government's ability to control donor aid, which now reaches 20 per cent of GDP. The Government of Mongolia and UNDP signed a US \$300,000 project at the beginning of December to improve aid coordination. The Support to Coordination and Management of External Development Resources Project will do the following: target government staff to assist with the articulation of a national development strategy and how it relates to ODA policy; improve capacity to screen and consolidate requests for assistance; design appropriate projects/programmes to monitor performance and develop human and institutional capacities to understand policies and procedures of ODA donors and to provide quality input to donor partners.

and lyophilise methods. The research is making it possible to better preserve mare's milk in the off-season.

The main goal of the project is to find new ways to generate income for poor women. In the case of mare's milk, rural women will be able to turn to local manufacturers who can preserve the milk. The researchers say the South Koreans expressed keen interest in producing dry diet from mare's milk.

## **Up Close and Personal**

Mr. B. Khuldorj is the National Project Coordinator for the Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st century.

Your project has a high profile. How long have you been working for UNDP?

I've been working for the project since 1997, and for UNDP since the 1990s. I was working as an Aid Coordinator, coordinating projects and foreign aid.

How do you see Mongolia in the 21st century? What will lead the country's development?

The fate of development in Mongolia depends on us. As I see it things are optimistic. The programme looks at all fields till 2020 – economy, industry, energy, meteorology etc. That is not the work of only the programme team. It is representative of a large group from statesmen to the common people will give their opinions.

Since you are working on a project focused



on the future, I'd like to ask about your future. I think you have a family. What about your children's future?

Perhaps I am a passionate optimist. I also believe their future will be bright. I have four great boys. They all know English and Russian and one learns Japanese and one German. So they have access to understanding others and can cooperate with others, which are the principles of sustainable development. I believe there are no borders to understanding and cooperation.

#### When are you going to be a grandfather?

Not within this century. I think I'll be very busy. I have much in my mind to do - I am a father of four. MAP 21 keeps me busy. Every morning when I wake up I count how many days are left till the coming century. Now we have 350 days (January 15).

#### Do you often face troubles in you work?

Overcoming adversities is a natural human trait If there is trouble, work must go on. If you are overcoming you are achieving the goal. Now we have the problem of building national capacity, which will take long.

#### What do you do in your leisure time?

I very seldom have it. I like wrestling, boxing and sometimes play chess. The best I like is travelling in the nature. I like to go everywhere in Mongolia. Every place has its speical features. Also I enjoy being with my family and talking. Unfortunately it is the rarest thing which happens. When I come home late in the evening my sons are already in bed and on the weekend I work.

## A young country experiments with new-found freedoms

Continued from pagel

These rapid changes have been dizzying for many older Mongolians, who must come to terms with the changing mentality of the population, 33 per cent of whom are between the ages of 16-32. In Ulaanbaatar, change is a part of everyday life. New restaurants and bars are cropping up on every corner. Foreign influences in music, food and consumer goods are growing at a rapid pace. Mongolians have even garnered the attention of the foreign press, including a November article in the New York Times Magazine, calling the country the youngest in the world.

On an average Friday night at the Top Ten Disco, government and UN outreach workers distribute condoms donated by the AIDS Care Centre and a youth calendar, What's Up?. Young women decked in mini skirts and knee high leather boots make their way into the enormous warehouse-like club together with young men in brightly coloured, silk button downs. "Calendars in their back pockets and condoms in their front pockets," commented Enkhsogt the government official from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare as he handed out the materials.

They are targeting the thriving club scene, the vanguard of Mongolia's sexual revolution.

Next stop was the Hard Rock, a smaller club in the center of the city known for its trendy crowd and cool ambiance. The condoms and calendars floated amidst the boy bands, striptease acts and copious alcohol consumption. One table of young women, sipping beer and watching the scene on the dance floor giggled when they realized what had been handed to them. They detached the condoms from the calendars and slipped them into their purses. Then one of them leaned over to ask for "another one" for her boyfriend and thank the distributors for doing such important work.

Only in the last few years have Mongolian youth had access to different methods of birth control and up to date information about sexuality and healthy lifestyles. The insurgence of condom campaigns and reading materials like the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) "Love" magazine, have been met with criticism.

Dr. Damien Wolhfahrt, Chief Technical Advisor with UNFPA's Reproductive Health Project explained that "There will always be people who believe such materials promote sexual activity among youth. However, international research in several countries and cultures has consistently shown that sexuality education and family life education in schools

Clutching youth calendar What's Up?, these club-goers are learning more about STDs/HIV/AIDS

actually delays the onset of sexual activity, reduces the number of STDs and reduces the number of unwanted pregnancies."

The debate over shifting values and changing lifestyles had a public airing at a mid-January conference implemented by the UN, the Government of Mongolia and Women for Social Progress. Unique to Mongolia, the six One World Youth Conferences (this one was on population and development) rally youth from across the country. It was the third in the series and challenged youth to examine the international conferences attended by Mongolia and the agreements signed by Mongolia since 1990.

For three days in Ulaanbaatar, One World delegates from all across Mongolia openly discussed, among other issues, gender, urbanization, HIV/AIDS, STDs, sexuality education, adolescent reproductive health, reproductive rights. The candid and refreshing presentation of these issues by representatives from the United Nations, the Government of Mongolia and NGOs, left few details up to the imaginations of the 146 delegates ranging in age from 15-19.

The delegates not only discussed the issues, they made appeals to the leaders of the Mongolian Government, the United Nations, and the community on the final day of the conference at the Community Forum. Once the youth reported their findings and presented their viewpoints, the leaders were asked to respond. "In your own community you must choose what issues are important and tackle them...You have to see not the problems, but the solutions," Ms. Linda Demers, UNFPA Resident Representative remarked. The delegates take the responses very seriously and plan to continue monitoring progress at the final One World Millennium Summit to be held in May 1999.

The delegates exuded a certain confidence and comfort level with the subject matters,

which surprised even the most experienced presenters. During the presentation from the UN Programme on AIDS by Ms. B. Oyun, one delegate inquired about the best place to buy good condoms and how to ensure good quality. Oyun remarked later adults "Even don't usually ask these types of questions. means that young people are becoming more open to talk about sexual-

ity and they are understanding their responsibility to use condoms to protect themselves."

B. Undraa, a 15-year-old delegate from Ulaanbaatar School Number 20, explained that he applied to One World, "To learn how we [youth] can participate in the decision making process, to share our opinions and to put the issues of population and development on the National agenda." He identified reproductive health as one of the most important issues to teenagers in Mongolia. When asked whether his friends know about issues of safe sex, HIV/AIDS and STDs, he blushed slightly: "There are posters on the boards at school about safe sex and condoms." Sitting up straight he continued in a concerned tone, "There is some information, but I feel it is extremely limited."

In Bulgan at Secondary School Number 2, 15 year-old youth delegate N. Bolotuya doesn't receive any classes on sexual education and reproductive health. "I go to a math school," she explained, "Algebra is the focus, so sexual education is cut out." Sitting in the Margaret Sanger Center, one of the multi-sector programme field trips, with her hair pulled back tightly in a pony tail and her petite stature, Bolotuya looked liked a little girl. But her words and insights made it clear that she was taking her role in One World very seriously: "It is through One World that the voices of youth are being heard."

Once returning to their hometowns, both Undraa and Bolotuya plan to share what they've learned at the One World Conference with their peers and families through presentations, informational meetings and presentations in their classes.

To get involved in One world, call 312171 or 322340. Emails can be sent to One World@magicnet.mn.One World radio programme: Every Friday at 3 pm on 107.5 FM.

## One World: Population and Development

In January hundreds of Mongolian youth gathered to debate the major issues of population and development. The following is an edited summary of the background information provided to the delegates.

#### What was in Cairo?

In the Egyptian city of Cairo in 1994, delegates from 180 countries of the world took part in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). One of the biggest events of the decade, the conference recognised the importance of the following issues and appealed to countries and the international community to take action. Themes are:

• Sustainable development, sustainable economic growth, education, particularly ef

#### Mongolia-Demographic facts

Population	2.410.000		
Population in the Year 2000	2.661.000		
Per cent urban	60.9		
Age distribution (%)			
0-14	38.0		
Youth (15-24)	20.6		
Ages 60+	5.5		
Median age (years)	20.6		
Population density (/sq.km)	2		
Annual population growth ra	te(%) 2.0		
Urban	2.9		
Rural	0.4		
Crude birth rate (/1000)	26.5		
Crude death rate (/1000)	6.7		
Net migration rate (/1000)	0.0		
Total fertility rate (woman)	3.27		
Life expectancy at birth (year	rs)		
Males	64.4		
Females	67.3		

#### girls;

- gender equity and equality;
- reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates, access to reproductive health and family planning services;
  - empowerment of women;
- family's roles, rights, composition and structure;
  - population growth and structure;
  - reproductive health and rights;
- urbanisation and internal immigration;
  - international migration;
- population development through education and technology;
- national action and International cooperation.

What is going on in Mongolia after Cairo 1994?

For implementation of ICPD goals, the Mongolian parliament ratified the following:

- 1996-Population Policy of Mongolia
- 1996-National Programme to Improve Women's status
- 1997-National Reproductive Health Programme
- 1997-National Adolescent Health Programme

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is playing a coordinating role on

Mongolia meeting the ICPD goals

Cairo conference set seven main goals. Mongolia's indicators are matching as follows:

- 1.Births attended by health professionals to be at least 60%, in Mongolia it is 99%. 2.Contraceptive prevalence rate among population of age 15-44 should be at least 55%, in Mongolia 53%.
- 3. At least 60% of population must have access to basic health services, 95% of Mongolian have access.
- 4. Infant mortality rate per 1000 births-50, in Mongolia it is 60.
- 5.Maternal mortality rate per 100.000 births-100; But Mongolia has 200.
- 6.Gross female enrolment at primary level (%) is 75, for Mongolia it is now 64.1 %. 7.Adult female literacy rate must be 50%, 74.8 % of Mongolian women are literate. (UN resources certify all figures)

population and development activities and the organisation has collaborated with Mongolia since the 1970s. From 1992 to 1996, UNFPA successfully completed The First Country Programme on Mother/Child Health/Family planning in cooperation with the Government of Mongolia. The Second Country Programme was approved by the Government and UNFPA for a period of five years from 1997-2001. It is being developed and elaborated in the form of two sub-programmes covering the themes of Reproductive health and Population Development strategies. The sub-programmes are implementing within special projects. ICPD goals in respect of infant mortality, maternal mortality have been reached to the positive changes but abortion and status of sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive tract inflammatory diseases are major issues to be considered.

#### Continued from page 1

built easily compared to other industrial sectors. The so-called "Irish Miracle", where a mostly agrarian society makes the leap to the information age, while increasing wealth and avoiding all the negative environmental degradation of traditional industry, is one model.

UNDP and the Government of Mongolia have established walk-in, public access Internet centres around the country, called Citizen's Information Service Centers. Unfortunately, their profile is low. And the services don't come cheap: fees can be as high as (Tg 2,600/hr or \$2.70/hr).

"It must be a communication center open to anybody," says Yamanaka. "It should be for exchanging opinions or getting much-needed information. These days people are moving away from government buildings (many of the centres are housed in government offices close

## Information revolution

to mayors or governors). Another problem is to make them self-sufficient." Project staff are giving these problems attention.

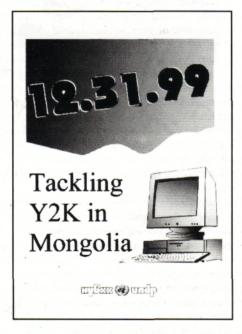
"From the very beginning, primary school students should be aware of global technology and how it can help development."The Soros foundation is cooperating with the project, aiming to connect secondary schools using the latest in satellite technology.

The project plans to have an ICT Summit in 1999 and will hold technology fairs for youth in the Spring.

An ICT Blue Print for Mongolia has been developed and will be published soon.

"These are just the seeds "says Yamanaka, hoping the harvest will be reaped in the first half of the next millennium.

This report outlines a strategy for Y2K in Mongolia. It is available from the UN Info Shop.



## Should Mongolia pursue a high birthrate policy?

By A. Delgermaa, BSkyB Reporter

Does the development of a country depend on the size of its population? This question is being hotly debated by Mongolian Parliamentarians, with the population now exceeding 2.4 million. According to the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) figure, the country is on track to reach 2.6 million by the early 2000s. BSkyB asked Mongolians on the street what they think.

The answers roamed from the realtionship between development and population, to how many children are appropriate for Mongolian families, to the rapid movement of the population from the countryside to cities, particularly Ulaanbaatar.

## U. Baasandorj, late twenties, works for a construction company.

"Mongolia has the possibility to develop with its current population. The problem is psychological. We are just waiting for others to help us like under socialism.

Of course having more people is good for development. Reduced birth rates have to do with lower family incomes. Generally,



Mongolians like to have as many children as possible.

The move to the cities is nothing wrong. One should live where he/she wants to. The people who can survive and live are left in the countryside."

## Olzii, early twenties, student of Mongolian National University.

"With the current situation of Mongolia's economy, two to three children is okay. Maybe in five to ten years it would be good for the population to expand. By then the economy might be stable. Moving to the cities is not wrong; people are looking for better comfort."

## D. Azzaya, at her late thirties, lecturer at MNU, Department of Meteorology.

"For Mongolia it is good to have more population. Industrialisation is restricted by the small work force. Other factors like mineral resource, raw materials etc. are all available in the country. Of course the number of people must



must fit the territory. High populations like India and China adversely affects the environment.

Because of lack of industrialisation in rural areas, residents move to more centralised places to improve their life. Right now only livestock breeding is a secure job. More industry is needed in the countryside."

## Ts. Buyanjargal, mid-twenties, cook and student of Institute of Economy.

"We need a statistical study on population: how much it must be in relation to territory. Right now social benefits and the economy aren't good. The government and the Health and Social Welfare Ministry should concentrate on guaranteeing health security.

Different development centres must be formed and more jobs created."

## B. Olziijargal, early twenties, student of the School of Foreign Service.

"I agree that Mongolia has a too small population. I think at a minmum it should be more than 10 million. Pregnancy should be encouraged by the state. I think mining industry is the most suitable industry in Mongolia to develop."

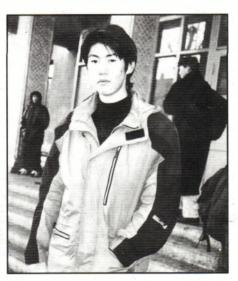
## Munkhtsetseg, early thirties, lecturer in a private language institute.

"The number of people doesn't matter. Human capacity and education is important. Mongolia's independence is at stake the population must be pure Mongol blood. I am afraid that may be in a hundred years there would be a very few Mongol people, mostly half Mongol people would stay here. Hybrids have divided hearts. After a hundred years what would happen to the country?

It is very strange that the rich have few children, since they still can afford to bring up more children. But the poor who can not even keep themselves have many children. The poor's children are ill, need more social care, and go into the streets etc. It burdens the weak economy of Mongolia. Instead government should have s special policy to control the birth. There should be detailed studies into whether the family can afford more children."

#### R.Khishigbuyan, student at MNU.

"I want the population to grow as fast as possible in the coming ten years. Then Mongolia would have enough working force. The population growth is more in countryside



than in cities. We should not just concentrate on developing the centralised places. Both urban and rural areas should have equal development. Government must have a special policy on infrastructure and on rural villages."

### T. Purevdorj, at his forties, lecturer.

"I wish it to be at least five million, if possible ten million. More development centres should be formed. If the population is more regional development would be easier."

#### A. Tsoodol, late teens, student at MTU.

"Population does not have a direct influence to development. I think four to five children is the proper number. There should be a special government policy to control movement. I think different development centres should be established. Last year State Ikh Hural were talking about moving the capital to Khar Khorin, the ancient capital of Mongolia. It is just a dream. Instead it can be another development centre."

## Pop music helps fuel Mongolia's market economy

Interview by Oyuntungalag, UNDP Communications Officer

In the last nine years the new freedoms in Mongolia have also been reflected in the country's popular culture. A thriving pop and rock scene has emerged over the last four years, with a few artists showing the potential to go beyond Mongolia. The energy of these musicians and singers has not gone unnoticed by the burgeoning advertising market. Pop bands are promoting many things, from face creams to beer. But while these artists and their promoters grab headlines in the gossip pages, there has been little serious writing on the business of popular music.

As part of a trilogy of books exploring emerging development issues, UNDP is funding the book "Mongolian Rock-Pop by its Own Voice". American musicologist Peter Marsh (Indiana University) spent half a year researching the book, and has been studying both modern and ancient Mongolian music. We chatted with him via-e-mail on the book and its interest to youth.

Peter, how did you start writing a book on Mongolian rock and pop culture? Even local writers rarely write on that topic?

I was approached by UNDP to contribute, along with Mongolian journalists, to a series of publications that deal with development issues in Mongolia. Given rock and pop's growing social and economic importance in Mongolian society, we thought our book would provide important ideas about the direction and nature of the nation's development.

What kind of research have you done?

I am a music researcher, meaning I study all forms of musical expression — including music, song and dance — wherever it occurs. I have spent much of the past three years researching Mongolian traditional music and song, but turned to Mongolian pop-rock in the spring of 1998, when I became particularly interested in the growing importance of pop-rock in Mongolian society. Now I am writing my dissertation about the history and development of the horse-head fiddle, and will pay special attention to its use in late twentieth century pop-rock.

What is the strategy you are writing this book with?

Our strategy is to create a book that is both fun to read and filled with interesting ideas. We wanted it to appeal to a wide range of people, from the youth to older people, as well as those interested in issues of development. Another strategy we took was to allow the people involved in pop-rock to speak for themselves, as much as possible. The book is less my own work than a bringing together of ideas and quotes of many people, from rock stars to government officials to people on the street.

Whom of mongolian rock poppers did you meet and what is your impression?

I tried to meet as many Mongolian pop-rock musicians as I could. I wanted to meet musicians and singers in a variety of pop-rock genres, from heavy metal and hard rock, rap and grunge to soft rock and pop. I spent time with members of the groups Haranga, Hurd, Kamerton, Suns, Nomin Talst, and with the singers D. Jargalsaikhan and Misheelt, and with those closely involved with them all, including On'n'Off Production's Ononbat, Khan Brau's G. Gankhuu and the famous pop-rock composer/arranger Purevdorj. Of course, I wanted to meet with more people, but our goal with this project was only to get a sense of the trends in Mongolian pop-rock, which I think we accomplished. More could certainly be written about Mongolian pop-rock, and I hope our work is only the beginning of more studies about it. My impression about Mongolian pop-rock is that it is a lively, diverse and at times innovative Mongolian art form that closely reflects many of the hopes, fears and aspirations of its primary audience, Mongolian youth.

Speaking personally, I find much of it to be very enjoyable, especially the pop-rock that keeps one foot in older musical traditions.



In the third part of your book you included the opinions and thoughts you have on the ways that Mongolians come out in the international music market. What will be your main advice to rock-pop musicians here?

Firstly, I think the musicians from whom I asked this question are correct when they say that Mongolian bands need to have contacts. As it is everywhere, especially in the States, becoming a star is one part talent and three parts contacts. Bands have got to get the attention of those who can make their music popular. Secondly, they shouldn't hope to compete head-on with American or European pop-rock groups, unless, as D. Jargalsaikhan says, they are willing to learn how to speak and think like an American or European. If a band wants to be the next Backstreet Boys, they're going to have to compete with hundreds of bands in America and Europe trying to do the same thing. Thirdly, I agree with several musicians and the pop-rock arranger Purevdorj that Mongolian bands have a unique opportunity to make it big in the global pop-rock scene by creating a form of folk-pop, or pop music that draws from its traditional Mongolian musical roots. This is why Khurd's song "Bakharakhal" or Saraa's song "Goolingoo" continue to be so popular with foreign audiences. The German group Enigma's recording "The Cross of Changes," which made use of a Mongolian long song, is also a good example of this. I think the folk-pop road is a way for Mongolian artists to get into the global pop-rock scene, and if they don't take this road, other, foreign artists, like Enigma, will take the road instead.

The book will be available in February from the UN Information Shop. It is hoped the book will make a modest contribution to the further study of popular culture in Mongolia and its implications for business development.

## A new survey of Mongolia's fight to stop violence against women

Violence is the topic of discussion more and more these days. Many newspapers capitalize on this public interest, with "Disgusting Crimes" newspaper being one of the worst in this genre, and the police force's "Detective" the best. While organisations are paying greater attention to this issue, official data to gauge the scale or seriousness of violence in Mongolia is still lacking.

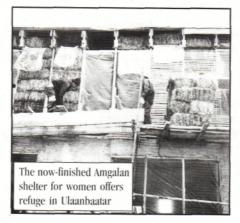
The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has appointed a national consultant for Mongolia to publicize the activities of NGOs and Government agencies working to reduce violence. Mrs. Baljinnyam, head of the Mongolian Association of International Ladies, was appointed as the consultant. Her research has listed 16 effective activities on fighting violence. The list shows names of NGOs and their activities and researchers and organisations working in this area.

According to the report, the most innovative and successful practices are:

- Shelter House for Victims of Violence (NCAV)
- Transition House in Tolgoit and Amgalan
- Publication against Violence "Khelkhee"
- Training Programme for male perpetrators (police officers and lawyers counsel male perpetrators in and out of the prison)
- Counselling Services for victims and their children (Mongolian Child Rights Centre, NCAV, Criminal Police Division for Prevention of Juvenile Crimes)
- Law reform (NCAV & MWLA prepared a draft law against domestic violence)

- 24 hour Hotline Service for Women Victims and support Groups
- Data Collection on violence against women

NGOs and Government organisations include the National Centre Against Violence, Mongolian Child Rights Centre, National CEDAW Monitoring Network, Mongolian Women Lawyers Association, the Criminal Police Division for prevention of Juvenile



Crime, and the Women's Information and Resource Centre.

These organisations will be included in UNIFEM's Regional Report. UNIFEM is organising The Global campaign on the Elimination Violence Against Women with the motto "A Life Free of Violence: It's our Right".

UNIFEM successfully implemented in

1993 The Strategic Project on Women's Income Generation in collaboration with the Mongolian Women's Federation. In the last five years co-operation between UNIFEM and Mongolia slowed down. Now UNIFEM is placing Senior Advisors in 10 countries across the world to support the UN Resident Coordinator system on Gender issues and to facilitate the effective implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action.

UN Secretary General Assembly called on UNIFEM to play a key role in supporting the implementation of the platform, particularly through the Resident Coordinator's System.

Beijing-based Dr.Lanyan Chen covers both China and Mongolia as a Gender Advisor.

Born and raised in Beijing, she holds a Masters degree in Communications and a Ph.D in sociology. Trained in political economy, development studies and industrial organization, she previously taught in gender and international development at the University of Victoria in Canada. Her recent field work in China includes work on women's cooperatives, women in poverty and strategies to address the needs of women workers who have been laid off during the process of industrial restructuring. Appointed as the UNIFEM Gender Advisor to the United Nations Resident Coordinators in China, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, she will assist the UN System to mainstream a gender approach and the needs of women in programming and projects.

She will also provide technical support to UNIFEM projects and activities in these countries.



A new kit is available for anyone interested in tackling the major environmental issues affecting Mongolia. Produced by UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programme, the kit contains the Mongolian Green Book and three books on activities. The kits are available from EPAP or from the UN Info Shop.

# The Role of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme In Nation Building

By Minerva Custodio-Coronacion UN Volunteerwith PAPO

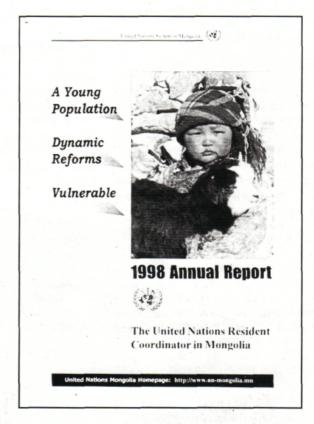
The National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP), which is the Mongolian Government's response to the increasing poverty brought about by cessation of support from the failed socialist system, is now entering a new phase in its programme implementation. In the initial phase of implementation, most of the basic interventions such as provision of seed capital for self-employment activities, improved access to primary health care and basic education facilities and basic relief services, have been done to help most of the poor people get out of poverty and start on their own. The job, though, does not end in getting them started. The next task is to help them sustain on their own what has been initiated, otherwise, all initial efforts will be rendered useless.

In most progressive countries, development did not come overnight. Neither did solely the government bring about development. It is the strong partnership between the government and the people that brings forth the desired change. The active involvement of the citizenry is one of the vital factors that propel the development process. The people should not just fully depend on the government to do everything for them. They should also take their part in nation building.

Poverty eradication, for example, is not just the government's, the assisting non-government organizations' or the donor agencies' concerns. After the assistance has been given by the different organizations it is now the responsibility of the poor people to take the lead in battling against poverty. After all, it is their own battle.

The sustainability of poverty eradicating measures depends largely on how self-reliant the target beneficiaries will evolve. Development of independent and progressive socio-economic grassroots organizations like the cooperatives also help in hastening the eradication of poverty because such organizations teaches the people to pool their

own resources and independently work together for their common good. In some countries, they even start them young as exemplified by the laboratory cooperatives in the Philippines. The positive values are inculcated as part of organizational development thereby turning vulnerable people into dynamic citizens, capable of shaping their own future in active partnership with their government.



Now available in Mongolian and English at the UN Info Shop.

# Improving human rights in Mongolia

By A. Delgermaa, BSkyB Reporter

Mongolia has made great strides in improving the level of human rights in the country. There isn't a single political prisoner and Mongolians proudly boast a free media. The democratic changes begun in the early 1990s have brought significant achievements in democracy and freedom. But economic transition is wrecking havoc with some of the gains. Increasing poverty kicks more children into the streets, alcoholism causes more family problems and increases crime, and government shortfalls in social benefits make the old and disabled helpless.

The UN country team (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UNFPA, UNHCHR, UNDP) signed with the Government of Mongolia a Memorandum of Understanding on Human

Rights on December 10, 1998. Mongolia has ratified most international covenants on humans rights and a 1992 Constitutional Court decision ratified most international principles of human rights for all Mongolians.

The UN Human Rights agency (UNHCHR) is collaborating with the government on founding a NHRC (National Human Rights Committee) that will be responsible for coordinating human rights issues and tackling violations.

"The law of NHRC is slackening at parliament, "according to UNHCHR National Coordinator Uyanga. "UNHCHR has been taking actions since 1991 to help the country to work out the law on the National Human Rights Commission." The project also focuses on public awareness of human rights. Human rights education is

considered weak . Even law schools spend little time on the subject.

The other end of the project is aiming to improve the human rights situation in prisons. Appalling prision standards always draw criticism from local media. Prisoners regularly die of starvation, sanitation is poor, tuberculosis rates are high, and physical abuse common. Last year Chief of General Police Ch. Murun took action to improve conditions in Mongolia's worst prison, Gants Hudag. Prisoners on remand were crowded 18 to a room built for just four.

"We want to train people who are able to conduct training in the regions," continues Uyanga. "But we are still debating on who to choose, with one option being prison chiefs." She agrees improving prison conditions will take a long time.

## New HIV/AIDS campaign led by NGOs

Under the slogan "AIDS-less Future Depends on Us", December 1st's World AIDS Day kicked-off in Mongolia under the leadership of non-government and government organisations. UNFPA's fee for service clinic Marie Stope's reproductive health clinic discounted its services while the Mongolian Youth Federation organised anti-AIDS promotion activities at 19 crowded places, including "Tsaiz" and "Harhorin" black markets. The peak of the campaign was the meeting at Ulaanbaatar's Youth Palace where 500 to 600 youth gathered, according to Mr. Demberelsuren, Head of the National Center of HIV/AIDS/STDs. We asked different organisations on thoughts of the past and future of AIDS campaigns.

Mr.Demberelsuren (HIV/AIDS/STD'S National Center)

"We celebrate World AIDS day as the day when we unite our voices. On this day government, public and all communities give their opinions/viewpoints on prevention against the pandemic. In previous years, AIDS prevention was discussed by a small group of professionals. This year the activity reached quite a large audience. Many organisations were encouraged and supported to initiate their own activities, and with their help we have reached new target groups. It's not understood any more as one-day campaign and anti-AIDS promo-

we aimed to give our target group people as much information as possible on HIV prevention. Because they are not accepted by society as being normal, we organise activities out of the public view. World AIDS Day is a good opportunity for us to have discussion with our target group on AIDS and other related issues. We did meetings with good local and foreign counsellors during AIDS campaign. We wanted to do a TV and Radio spot. But it is still not being aired as Mongolian TV and Radio are not giving their

approval to

know I'm happy and think they are very useful - I will definitely share with my friends. To be honest the music is too loud and I can't hear what people are saying. I know AIDS is not curable and here in the country there are some people who already have the disease. I think more people should know about AIDS.

EEGN NYTAUL

Mr. Wolf

tion is continued throughout the year. For 1998

> World 'AIDS Day, organisa-

tions started planning and discussions one month before the 1st of December. We learned that coordinating many different organisations is not an easy task. We are now supporting more training and research work and we are planning to have a Conference on AIDS research for the 1999 World AIDS Day. We still can not update the information on health status of the two HIV positive Mongolians.

Mr. Urtnasan ("TUS DEM" NGO)

Our NGO was established in 1996 with the purpose of giving support and help to gay people. From then we implemented two projects with funding from UNDP and WHO. As gay people are a vulnerable group to HIV,

air, the programmes.1998 World

AIDS campaign was organised in different level to compare with previous years experiences because many NGOs and development agencies were involved. What are we seeing as our future is to support gay people to establish their own NGO. They want it but it's also hard for them to face the increasing pressure from society.

I know AIDS is not curable and here in Mongolia there are some people who already have the disease. I think more people should know about AIDS.

Ariuntuya,18 year old student (at the Youth palace activity)

We are excited to be here. I would like to know more about AIDS prevention and stuff like that. Although I could not read it

and Ms. Tuya (GTZ project on reproductive health)

Wagner

It is important to have initiatives on AIDS prevention all year round. If we only fight against AIDS during World AIDS Day, it is not effective. We were one of the lead organisations of this year's campaign. We learnt many things. From next year the campaign needs to be targeting aimags, not just city people. Also we were somehow disappointed to see some untrue, we would say, messages from very nice performances by students. It's our fault, and the fault of people who are doing the promotion - not coordinating messages. It can only lead to confusion. For example, people fear HIV rather knowing the right methods of prevention. Instead of making young people to know how to avoid unwanted pregnancy they are blaming the ones who have made mistakes.

## More super-insulated houses for 1999

A successful UNDP project to introduce super-insulated energy efficient building technology to Mongolia is entering its second phase. The PEES or Provision of Energy Efficient Social Services Project is hoping to better its tally of eight buildings for 1998 (see table at the right).

The buildings use bales of straw to insulate the wall caveties of buildings. The project targets buildings that are being used for social services, since large portions of their budgets go towards heating costs. All the buildings are eventually turned over to respective local governments.

A tour of four aimags by the project in the summer of 1998 ( Paul Groenewegen, UNDP PO, Mr. Ochirbat, Ministry of Infrastructure, Mr. Ganbold, Mr. Tsend "PEESS" project and Mr. Otgonbayar ADRA construction engineer) concluded the following:

- many requests from central and local governments proved the need for closer collaboration with local governments;
- there needs to be more advocacy and publicity to meet people's information needs and to correct misconceptions (people think the straw is the same as grass and

UNDP "PEESS" straw buildings built in 1997-98

- 1. Health clinic in Biocombinat village of Ulaanbaatar 0 December 97'
- 2. Women Development Center In Amgalan of Ulaanbaatar July 98'
- 3. Health clinic Bagahangai District, Ulaanbaatar September 98'
- 4. School dormitory in Dashinchilen soum, Bulgan aimag October 98'
- 5. Cultural center in Tsagaan-Uur soum, Huvsgul aimag October 98'
- 6. Health clinic in Dulaankhaan village of Shaamag soum, Selenge aimag October 98'
- 7. Kindergarten in Jargalant soum, Tuv aimag

January 99'

 Kindergarten in Chingeltei district, Ulaanbaatar. vet to the Government Not transferred

fear the flammability of the material); Need more ties and cooperation with professional agencies.

PEESS project will be continued in 1999 with funding of \$1.8 million from the Government of Norway, and pipeline funding of \$1 million from UNDP/GEF and \$740,000 from the Dutch government.

For the project team, the reputation of the technology took a beating in 1998, with several highly publicised fires. Sub-standard construction techniques were to blame in many of the cases.



Photo by Tsend

## **Dutch chip in for youth advice hotline**

The Dutch embassy in Beijing has come to the aid of a popular youth reproductive health

advice hotline. Named simply the "Trust Phone", the hotline was established in April of last year and has received calls from more than 3,000 teens. Initiated by some doctors and gynaecologists, the Adolescent Futures Center (an NGO) also offers, along with counselling services, a clinic.

Dr. Ayush, a well-known pediatric-gynaeocologist and teacher at the Medical university, jointly runs the NGO with two young doctors, Enkhee and Bayarmaa. Typical calls range from fashion and fitness to preg-

nancy and STDs. The clinic has treated more than 200 mostly teenage girls.

" I heard about the trust phone from my friend," says 17-year-old Enhmaa, who was worried she had an STD. "I was embarrassed to come but my friend took me here. Here I got a lot of support and I am so glad that I talked about my hidden problem with an adult. Now I feel very relieved and I think many more teens could come here and get support."

The centre, which was initially established with funds from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the UB City Mayor's Office and the City Health Department, was in urgent need of a new sponsor. The Dutch Embassy in China, which also has responsibilty for Mongolia, chipped in with a new year's present.

"With the US \$7,800 of funding we will equip the office, purchase compatible equipment and support future training," continues a happy Dr. Ayush. She stresses the importance of such counselling services. With many of their customers teenagers, students, children of vulnerable groups, and also young families, the fact is 90 per cent of them could not pay for the service.

"Adolescent reproductive health counselling and the clinical service is something to which we should give first priority. But

not many people are working in this field right now, and it seems to be also a hard sector to sustain at this time of economic difficulties. But in future if my dream comes true, I would like to see our NGO become a complex organisation with a fashion and fitness centre, a reproductive health training centre and medical service provision. Fitness seems to be a major need of youth." Dr. Ayush and the staff of the centre pass on their thanks to the Dutch Embassy in China and also to Mr. Jerry van Mourik, UN Support Officer to the Resident Coordinator, for helping them to fulfil their wishes.

"People are afraid of fire," says Mr.Tsend, who works for UNDP's PEESS project. The technology has been embraced by many people who are looking for innovative ways to cut down on heating costs. Many organisations including UNDP, the Government of Mongolia and ADRA are funding initiatives for strawbale buildings. While UNDP projects adhere to the highest standards available, many independent contractors don't follow the best practices when it comes to building with straw bales.

"Although only one UNDP project building burned down," continues Tsend. "at the eve of the second stage of the programme we are thinking carefully on how to avoid fire in the future. The reputation and effectiveness of the project is at stake. Some builders don't segregate the chimney from the strawbale part of the roof. And when the chimney is heated, sparks from the metal chimney will ignite straw resulting in a fire."

The project is in its fourth year and the project is starting its second phase from April of 1999.

## Letters

BSkyB receives many letters from our dedicated readers. All of them are appreciated but we only have space to print a few. The following is a selection sent to BSkyB and to our UN Homepage.

Dear "Blue Sky" team,

The Women's Information and Research Center (WIRC) staff members and volunteers have been using your bulletin for information dissemination and advocacy purposes as a member of the Mongolian Resource Center's Network. Information and articles contained in English version of the bulletin were of great interest and useful

However, the Mongolian version always had grammatical and stylistic problems. The issue #9 of the "Blue Sky' bulletin is the worst example. Even, we tried very hard to find one good article in this issue, unfortunately we failed to do so. Particularly, "the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Understanding Poverty, UN Field Trip, Just Around the Corner" and etc were full of Mongolian language basic grammar mistakes, stylistic problems, bad translation and misinterpretations.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to advise you to look into the "Mongolian Version" more carefully and accurately in order to make the articles and information understand

**Upcoming events** 

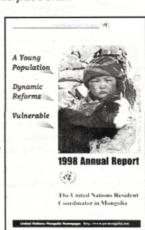
Resident Coordinator's Office
One World UN Conference Series

- April 3 1999, Social Development
- April 22 1999, Women
- May 14-17 1999, National Summit

Info Tech Town Hall Meeting
2nd week of march (broadcast on
Mongol TV after)

Info Tech Enterpise Forum April-May

The UN Annual Report is hot off the presses. Copies are available in English and Mongolian. For your personal copy just contact Mr. Jerry van Mourik, UN Support Officer to the Resident Coordinator



#### **Arrivals and Departures**

Mr. Osman Shommad, a UNV from Sudan, is working as a Technical Adviser for the Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation Project; Dr. Arun Kumar Mallik, a UNV from India, is working as a Team Leader and Health Educator; UNV Nikolay Nikolaev is working as an English teacher; UNV Tina Voolmann will work with the UNAIDS project as an adviser. The longest serving UNV Robert Ferguson (EPAP) left at the end of Feb; UNV Kate Johnson returned to Canada.

able and logical.

If you find this job difficult we can offer our assistance.

We wish you success and prosperity. Group of your faithful readers. Editor's note: We are taking measures to correct this problem.

## Comments from the UN Mongolia website

"Hey guys. I really like what you do on this magazine. I read a couple of articles that are very well written and they reminded me of home. I would like to say "keep up the good work".

Timur Tsend, USA.

"I am a huge fan of Mongolian culture and history. I really love your website. I would like to find Mongolian friends or email penpals", Sonja Albrecht, USA, salbrecht96@hotmail.com

"I visited your site because I'm rather interested in exotic countries and Mongolia is certainly one from my point of a view. What I'd like the most is to get a contact with Mongolian people either by e.mail or penpalling. Can you please help me with that? There are not that many Mongolian people in the net", Nina Kemppainen, Finland, ninakemppainen@hotmail.com

"I meet your organisation on the net. You have done a fantastic job. I hope you will continue (with your staff) to continue this. At the moment I am looking around for information on agriculture and coming financial tenders in this area. Just solid down to earth stuff. It takes a lot of time to dig myself through all the topics which are interesting for western vistors. Why am I so interested in this? There are serious problems in food, foodsupply and foodmarketing in Mongolia. At the moment I am trying to link some big Dutch companies to programmes in Mongolia." Jan Haeije de Jong, the Netherlands, proterra@tref.nl.

"I am interested in visiting Mongolia. I was also interested in foriegn ownership of property and buisnesses, and investing in current buisnesses. If you could direct me to the correct agencies I would appreciate it." J Flack, USA, flacogordo@hotmail.com



Нэгдсэн Үндэстний Байгууллагын United Nations Mongolia

## List of new publications and reports

#### In English

- 1. The Asian financial crisis: The Challenges for Social Policy, ILO, Geneva, 1998
- 2. Mongolia Country report. The Economist Intelligence Unit, London, 4th quarter 1998
- 3. Paying their fair share? Donor countries and international population assistance
- Population Action International, Washington D.C., 1998
- 4. Pre-feasibility study of the Processing of Crop Products in Khovd aimag, Mongolia FAO/RAP-Bangkok, 1998
- Renewable energy for Mongolia. Proposal made to UNDP-Mongolia, The AMIDA GROUP, Inc., 1997
- Strenthenening Capacities for Growth through Trade and Investment in Asia and Pacific. Report
  of the Programme Evaluation Mission, 1998
- 7. Mongolia: Rapid Economic assessment -a child focused perspective Save the Children Fund- UK Mongolia, 1998

#### In Mongolian:

- 1. Монголын эдийн засгийн нөхцөл байдалд хүүүхдийн асуудлын байр сууринаас хийсэн товч судалгаа, Англмйн Хүүхдийг ивээх сангийн Монгол дахь хөтөлбөр, 1998
- 2. НҮБ-ын тухай Арван жилийн сургуулийн гарын авлага, Нэг Ертөнц төслийн хүрээнд НДЭХ-өөс эрхлэн гаргав, 1999
- 3. Хүүхдийг хөгжүүлэх талаар 2000 он хүртэл баримтлах үндэсний хөтөлбөр Нэг Ертөнц төслийн хүрээнд НДЭХ-өөс эрхлэн гаргав, 1999
- 4. Хүн ам ба тогтвортрй хөгжил эрчимт сургалтын гарын авлага МУИС-ийн Хүн Ам Зүйн Сургалтын Төв, Улаанбаатар, 1998

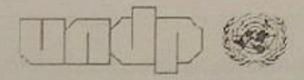
We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is March 20.

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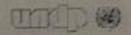


Prime Minister Ts. Elbegdorj (left) takes office from former Prime Minister Enkhsaikhan (right)



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# A note about Mongolia Update

The Mongolia Update has proven to be one of the more popular documents produced by the UNDP Mongolia office. Since the autumn of 1997 UNDP has been able to offer two more frequently updated sources of information: the UNDP homepage and our monthly newsletter, the Blue Sky Bulletin (available from our office if you are not already receiving it). Please use the United Nations Homepage at <a href="http://www.un-mongolia.mn">http://www.un-mongolia.mn</a> to keep abreast of the latest political, economic and social developments in Mongolia. Mongolia Update is an unofficial document of UNDP and is designed to periodically keep our partners outside of Ulaanbaatar apprised of issues in the country.

# 1. Background — a year of change

Mongolia's first elected noncommunist government, the Democratic Union Coalition, came to office in June 1996 with a strong mandate and a promise of sweeping social and economic change. The coalition of the Mongolian National Democratic Party and the Mongolian Social Democratic Party ran on the basis of a U.S.-style election platform, the Contract with Voters, and gained 50 of the 76 seats in the State Ikh Hural (Parliament).

The new government's action programme was founded on fundamental economic reform, including privatisation of the major industrial enterprises and the state-owned banks, liberalisation of prices and the abolition of import tariffs.

The government achieved some economic success, including increasing foreign-currency reserves to nearly U.S. \$100 million and a flourishing of small-scale private enterprise in the capital city.

Ulaanbaatar, Inflation in 1997 was reduced to 17 per cent while growth surpassed three per cent. Unemployment and poverty, however, remained scrious issues.

By the autumn of 1997, the Coalition was hoping to embark on large-scale privatisation and accelerated economic reform. But the government of Prime Minister M.
Enkhsaikhan began to face opposition as the high social cost of the economic reforms began to become apparent. The September 1997 launch of the first-ever UNDP/Government of Mongolia Human Development Report (HDR) high-lighted the living status of Mongolians during the difficult transition era.

At the start of the academic year in September 1997, college and university students, led by the Mongolian Students. Union, staged an escalating series of protests that culminated in a one-day student strike. Their demand was a reduction in tuition fees — which had doubled in some cases—and in domnitory rents, also up sharply

After meeting with student leaders, the government acceded to their demands, instructing university directors to cut fees and slash dorm rents. But with no commitment of extra money from the government, university administrators warned cuts would have to be made in other areas, including supplies and instructors' salaries.

From the opening day of the autumn session of the State Ikh Hural on October 1 1997, the Opposition Mangolian People's Revolutionary Party went on the attack. Opposition leader N. Enkhbayar, elected to

Parliament in an August by-election, used his maiden speech to demand the resignation of the government. He accused the Coalition of ignoring its election promise to cut taxes by 20 to 30 per cent, of bungling privatisation and of neglecting the social sphere.

The government, he said, "is serving the interests of a few companies—including those of some members of the State Ikh Hural — while overburdening the nation's small- and medium-sized inclusaries."

The MPRP demand was backed by demonstrations organised by the party, trace unions and activist groups like the Mongolian United Movement. But these protests were small and made up largely of pensioners, one of the groups hardest hit by shrinking social spending.

Marshalling its large majority, the government easily survived an October 17 no-confidence vote by a 47-25 margin. The Prime Minister used the occasion to defend his government's record, noting that inflation had been decreased, the tugtug stabilised, foreign currency reserves increased and a banking crisis halted.

But by the end of the autumn session, rifts began to appear in Coalition forces. The State Budget for 1998 was approved in November. It forecast a deficit, and further spending cuts — notably to lawenforcement agencies — sparked grumbles among some MPs.

In January, the government released its action plan for 1998. It vowed to stabilise the macroeconomy, cut government spending and boost private ownership in all sectors. The rate of privatisation was to be intensified, with an emphasis on selling off the state-owned banks. Health and education were to be moved toward a "financed by the client" system.

But the year also began with worrying economic signs, as the Asian
economic crisis finally began to filter
down to Mongolia. The price of
copper, Mongolia's largest foreigncurrency camer, fell by nearly a
quarter in the first four months of
1998. Prices for cashmere and gold,
other major exports, also declined.

At the beginning of 1998, differences within the Coalition intensified. A number of Democrats were dissatisfied with the system under which the Prime Minister and Cabinet were not parliamentarians but "experts" appointed from the outside. On January 15, after several weeks of wrangling, the State Ikh Hural ruled that, under the Mongolian Constitution, MPs could serve as Cabinet Ministers.

A group of Coalition MPs, arguing that greater coordination was needed between Parliament and the government if the Democrats' election promises were to be fulfilled, began to work for the change of the Enkhsaikhan Cabinet.

Parliament resumed April 6 after a two-and-a-half month break during which fissures in the Coalition opened. An earlier attempt in February by leaders of the National Democratic and Social Democratic Parties to merge the Coalition partners had been rejected by party

members. Likewise, on March 27, the General Council of the Mongolian National Democratic Party had called for the resignation of its own government. The move was led by Ts. Elbegdorj, the 35-year-old Deputy Speaker of the State Ikh Hural and parliamentary caucus leader of the MNDP—a natural Prime Minister in a government of MPs.

The government had not acted in line with the wishes of Parliament and so should resign, he said.

Prime Minister Enkhsaikhan complained that a faction in the party was trying to oust him. He was right.

As the spring parliamentary session began, the intensity of demonstrations calling for the government's resignation, which had gone on sporadically since the fall, increased.

Then Prime Minister Enkhsaikhan on April 17, a day after an extraordinary joint meeting of the ruling councils of the MNDP and MSDP, handed his resignation to President N. Bagabandi. It was approved by the State Ikh Hural on April 22, by a vote of 59-1. Ten MPs boycotted the session, saying the move was unconstitutional.

The resignation provoked mixed reactions amongst Mongolians. Some felt it would speed up the pace of reform. Others saw it as a grab for power by a faction in the Coalition, or were worried about the lack of experience of the Cabinet of MPs.

The new Prime Minister, Ts.
Elbegdorj, took office April 23,
vowing to chart the same economic
course as his predecessor, and to

operate a more open and transparent government. Although he replaced a number of senior civil servants, he said he would not make changes to the structure of the nine government Ministries.

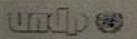
He vowed to press forward with a busy spring session, in which a number of bills central to the government's programme—including a new law on foreign investment and a long-awaited media law — were stated to be passed.

But he immediately ran into trouble.

Elbegdori nominated his ninemember Cabinet April 27, but only five of the nominees received the approval of Parliament, as nominee after nominee was rejected in the State Ikh Hural. The last Minister— Education Minister Ch. Saikhanbileg —was not approved until May 28. He was the fifth nominee put forward for the post.

The local media expressed concern about the average age of 35.8. In place at last, some people began to worry about its lack of experience.

At the beginning of June 1991, the 25 Opposition MPs began a boycott of Parliament in protest over the government-approved merger of the 18-month-old state-owned Sergeen Bosgoltyn (Reconstruction) Bank with the private Golomt Bank. The merger, which the government carried out with the backing of international financial institutions, was necessary, said the Finance Minister, because the Reconstruction Bank.



was insolvent, with 70 per cent of its Ig 11.2 billion (U.S. \$13.7 million) in our standing loans classed as unreliable.

The Opposition labelled the merger a "conspiracy", charging the government with driving the bank to its doom by racking up Tg 8.7 million (\$10.5 million) in debts and pointing to links between the Golorn! Bank and members of the National Democratic Party.

The result was a Parliament paralysed for all of June, since without the opposition a quorum could not be reached and, thus, Parliament could not meet. Key bills —including the foreign investment

oill slated to be approved before a June 24-26 investors' conference in Ulaanbaatar — languished.

The crisis deepened when a majority of the all-party task force appointed to investigate the merger ruled that the move was improper.

The President warned that if the impasse were not resolved soon, he would have no choice but to dissolve the State Ikh Hural and call on early election.

"Even if the government resigns or there is a new election, it will not mean that Mongolia will reverse its chosen path," Prime Minister Elbegdorj told journalists on June 18, "The people have already made their choice."

# 2. Who's Who in the Cabinet



## Prime Minister In Etherstory

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## Finance Minister B. Barbayan.

At as one of Monaolia's best known pointed figures known to one and all as Barbar A founding momber of the Mongolian Social Democratic purp, he placed a ten role in the democratic numerical of the early 1990s. Trained has been placed as a second is researches from 1981 to 1991, that founding head of the Sievel and supposition founding head of the and served as an independent foundation from 1994 until the was elected to Parliament in the 1990 general election.



## Foreign Minister R. Amarjargal.

57, trained as an economist at the National Economics Institute in Moscow. He worked for the Mongohan Trace Union Federation and as a university lecturer and rector of the Economics College in Utaanbaatar. He was elected to Parliament in 1996 for the Mongolian national Democratic Party. He supports Manchester United Football Crub.



# Minister of Nature and the Environment S. Bayarrougt, 31, studied economies at

Moreow University before going into politics. He worked for the Revolutionary Youth Organisation between 1989 and 1990, and sat on the former assembly, the State Baga Hural, from 1990 to 1992. He lectured at the Political Education. Academy from 1992 to 1994 and spent the next two years studying in Germany. He was elected to parliament in 1996.



Justice Minister S. Batchulaun, 44, stadled law at the Mongolian National University and worked as a lecturer at the Police Institute and as a senior creal servant for the Office of the Hural of People's Deputies and the President's Office. He was a member of the State Baga Hural from 1992 to 1994 and in 1994 was head of the MNDP's Ulaanbastar Council.



Minister of Agriculture and Industry N.
Altankhuyag, 40, is another bio-physicist, trained at the Mangolius National
University. He lectured at the university for a decade from 1981 to 1991 was accretary at the Mongolius Social
Comocratic Party between 1990 and 1992 and in 1993-1994 was director of the Enc.
Odor company.



Health and Social Security Minister
Sh. Bathayar, 52, trained as a doctor at
the Mongolian Medical University. After
military service in 1964-67, he worked as a
doctor at Zuunkharaa hospital in Selenge
aimag, a lecturer at Darkhan Medical
College and chief doctor at Darkhan city
hospital He held that post until he was
elected to parliament in 1996 for the
Mongolian Social Democratic Party.



Minister of Infrastructure Development
8. Zorig, 36, is another high-profile
National Democrat MP, a Member of
Parliament since 1990. A sociology
graduate of Moscow Sate University, he
led the Revolutionary Youth Organisation's Ulambautar wing from 1985 to 1986
and was a lecturer at the Mongolian
National University between 1986 and
1989, obtaining a Masters degree from the
university in 1990. He was a member of
the State Baga Hural in 1990-1992 and has
been a member of the State 1kh Hural
since 1996.



## Defense Minister R. Odonbuatar,

17. studied economics and management at the Mongohan National University and in Novosibirsk, Russia. He completed two years of military service between 1984 and 1985. He worked as an accountant and economist for several source administrations in his native Khovsgor aimag and was head of the aimag branch of the MNDP from 1992 to 1994. He was elected to the State 1kh Hural in a 1994 by election.



Minister of Enlightenment (Science, Technology, Education and Culture)Ch. Suikhanhileg. 29 is Mogolia's youngest MP. He studied at Moscow's Young Communist University and the Mongolian National University and has served on the executive of the Mongolian Youth Federation since 1991, rising to President—a position he still holds. He was elected to parliament for the MNOP in 1996.

# 3. What's on the government's plate?

At the start of 1998, the Enkhsaikhan government indicated that it had tulfilled 38 per cent of its Commet. With Voters, But there is still a let to do, 1998 was supposed to be the year that the government increased the pace of reform. Plans for the year included overhands of all seasons society, from education to the arms

Stabilising the mocroeconomy is the number goal, with the government setting a target of cutting both horsowing and spending, holding inflation below 20 per cent, keeping the exchange rate stable within five per cent and maintaining U.S. SS limition in foreign-currency reserves. 4 5 per cent real growth in the GDP, a budget deficit held to 8 6 per cent of GDP and a decline in budget revenues of less than 2.1 per cent.

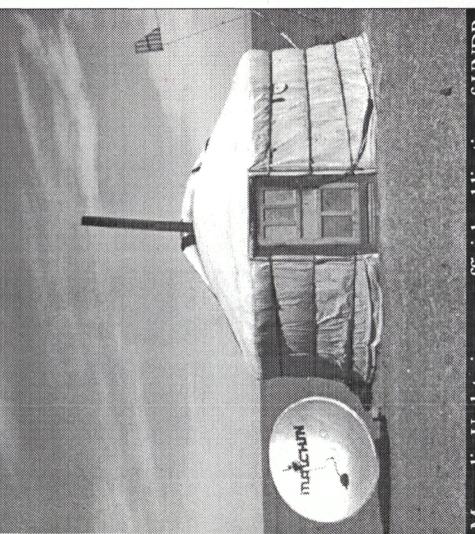
Privatisation is still the major pillar of the government's plans and the big state enterprises — including the Endenet copper mine and the stateowned banks — are supposed to go on the black in 1998. On the industrial front, increased production of gold, minerals and od is the key.

On the social side, while cutting spending, the government vowed to improve the infrastructure and efficiency of finel, water and electricity supplies, increase pensions in line with inflation, a transportant minimum wage to move that came into effect laimary. It and create more jobs and services for this abiled. Mongolians and improve both food supply and food safety.

As the time of printing key pieces of legislation, including the foreign investment law and the media law, were being beld up by a boy cott of Parliament by the opposition MPRP. The MPRP has refused to return a furdiament until the decision on the merger of the government bank and the private Goloote Bank has been revoked. The situation remains de affocked and Parliament is unable to meet.

# Mongolia Update

8661



Mongolia Update is an unofficial publication of UNDP and documents key trends and events of 1998. E-mill: dsoult@undp org. mi United Nations Homepage: http://www.un-mongolia.mn

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## **Preface**

Tongolia Update has proven to be one of the more popular documents produced by the UNDP Mongolia office. Since the autumn of 1997 UNDP has been able to offer two more frequently undated sources of information: the UNDP homepage and our monthly newsletter, the Blue Sky Bulletin (available from our office if you are not already receiving it). Please use the United Nations Homepage at http://www.un-mongolia.mn to keep abreast of the latest political, economic and social developments in Mongolia. Mongolia Update is an unofficial document of UNDP and is designed to periodically keep our partners outside Ulaanbaatar apprised of issues in the country. We take responsibility for any shortcomings or oversights and welcome feedback from users of this report.

# The Year that Was - 1997

One

ongolia began to turn the corner in 1997 as market reforms started to bear fruit. During the turbulent transition period of the early 1990s, Mongolians witnessed soaring inflation and a generally weak economy. This was the result of the transition period following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end to subsidies and trading arrangements of that era. With the election of Mongolia's first non-communist government in June 1996, the Democratic Union Coalition used its strong mandate to press ahead with accelerated market reforms while building on the foundation put in place by the reformed communists prior to 1996.

The new government's action programme was founded on fundamental economic reform, including privatisation of major industrial enterprises and state-owned banks, liberalisation of prices and the abolition of tariffs.

According to the government of Mongolia the main objectives of Mongolia's economic and social development in 1997 were fulfilled. In 1997 the most obvious successes were in the macroeconomic realm and in the emerging service sector. Inflation in 1997 was decreased first by 35 per cent and then by 17 per cent (it had reached 300 per cent during the 1990s) with a 31.1 per cent rise in economic growth. The GDP increased by 3.3 per cent against that of 1996. A budding service sector was already beginning to show its face on the streets of Ulaanbaatar. New shops, restaurants and bars were not just catering to the well-heeled foreign community but to the growing number of Mongolians with disposable income and an appetite for consumables. The number and quality of vehicles on the roads was also

evidence of a consumer boom after years of pent up demand (there were 65 020 registered vehicles in 1996 and 70 088 in 1997). .

The 1997 state budget revenue of Mongolia totalled Tg 227.6 billion and state budget expenditures reached Tg 289 billion. Expenditures exceeded income by Tg 70.4 billion. Industrial production increased by 4.4 per cent against 1996. A source of pride for a traditionally nomadic country, the livestock population reached a historic high in 1997 with 31.3 million heads, up 2 million from 1996.

Privatization of state entities continued apace in 1997 with apartments being sold by the state to occupants; in a surprise move the government decided to give away apartments for free to those who had lived in them prior to October 1996. The State Property Committee's goal for 1998 is to finish privatization of all small state entities which now total 500.

#### Oil Prospects Brighten

Prospects for increasing government revenues from oil extraction brightened in 1997. On June 6 in Dornod aimag 700 barrels of high quality petroleum were extracted from a 2 400 meter well. Four wells out of the six tapped had petroleum and it is believed that the region will have an abundant reserve for several years. Estimates by a Swiss bank and the American Soco Company place the deposit at 15 million barrels of high quality oil with the potential to deliver 700 barrels per day. Twenty wells are expected to be drilled up by 1999.

Flash floods killed 13 people and over 5 000 animals, and destroyed over 13 dwellings in Galuut, Bayan-Ovoo and Ulziit sums of Bayankhongor aimag on June 23. The total damage was estimated to be Tg 164.2 million. The MIAT Yu-12 plane crash in the spring(???) in Dundgobi, killed eight and seriously injured four people.

Despite some improvements in the economy, high levels of unemployment and consequently, a perceptible increase in poverty ( not to mention a slow economic recovery outside the capital ) took its toll on the political realm. Support for the opposition MPRP remained strong and cracks were beginning to appear in the Coalition government.

In the political arena, MPRP candidate for the presidential office, N. Bagabandi, received 60.8 per cent of the vote in a May 18 election, in a campaign stressing social justice. International observers called the election free and just and on June 20 the newly elected President of Mongolia took office. At the start of the academic year in September, students from state-owned colleges and universities, led by the Mongolian Students' Union, went on strike. They demanded a reversal of tuition fee and dormitory charge hikes. After meeting with student leaders, the government acceded to their demands, instructing university directors to cut fees and slash dormitory rents. But with no commitment of extra money from the government, university administrators warned cuts would have to be made in other areas, including supplies and instructors' salaries. It was the first-ever attempt by public university students to go on strike.

#### MPRP Clash with Coalition

With the opening of Parliament on October 1 the government was challenged by a more confident opposition led by the MPRP, newly invigorated by the election of its candidate for President. The leader of the MPRP, N.Enkhbayar, took office and chose the opening session of Parliament to call for the government's resignation. He accused the Coalition of ignoring its election promise to cut taxes by 20 to 30 per cent, of bungling privatisation and neglecting the social sphere. Finally, on October 17 the government marshalled its majority in a secret ballot to defeat the resolution, with 47 MPs voting against and 25 for. Prime Minister M. Enkhsaikhan used the occasion to defend his government's record, noting that inflation had been decreased, the tugrug stabilized, foreign currency reserves increased and a banking crisis deflected.

A mayoral decree issued in July called for all Ulaanbaatar residents between the ages of 15 to 40 years to undergo

compulsory testing for HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) during a campaign slated for the first two weeks of October. The supervisor in charge of the city's health office, Mr. Y. Terbish, then said that only females in this "high-risk" age group were to be tested. Finally, the Ministry of Health ascertained that the campaign was to be carried out in all aimags and non compulsory.

According to the STD/AIDS Prevention Center director Mr. H.Davaajav, about 84 per cent of the Ulaanbaatar population between the ages of 15 to 40 underwent voluntary testing; 1,036 were infected with STDs, whereas 300 tested negative for HIV.

Prime Minsiter M. Enkhsaikhan was forced to call an emergency Cabinet meeting in December when it was discovered that one of two men from Cameroon – previously arrested for fraud – had tested positive for HIV, gonorrhoea and trichomonas while in prison. The two men became a media cause celebre, and were later deported from Mongolia. A police investigation revealed that the two men had had sexual relations with four Ulaanbaatar sex workers, who in turn had sex with 56 Mongolian men. One of the women tested positive for HIVs, making her's the second known case in Mongolia. The first HIV case to be identified in Mongolia was reported in 1992.

# The Year So Far - 1998

Two

## January 1998

- ♦ The new year brought more than just hangovers for Mongolians; it also brought a shorter work week. Since the early days of communism Mongolians had grown used to a six-day work week. This changed when the Parliament amended the labour law to switch to a five-day work week as of January 1. Despite prophecies of doom from some quarters, the transition to a shorter work week passed quietly. Though compulsory holiday time was shortened to 14 days from three weeks, wages stayed the same. According to a Parliament poll, 72 per cent of the population supported the change.
- ♦ The government's Year of Youth also kicked off the new year with its own song sung by Mongolia's top pop musicians. Tg 150 million will be spent on activities planned for the year, including concerts and a summer youth forum. According to the State Statistical Office, 64 per cent of the population is between the ages of 16 and 35. Youth have been hit hard by the economic changes, with 62.5 per cent of the unemployed under 35. Secondary and higher education enrolment reached 116,300, with 57.6 per cent female and 42.4 male.
- The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Young Leaders' Club jointly established the National Foundation Against AIDS. The Foundation will organize peer counselling, testing and advice for young couples.

- The Mongolian Nature Protection Association has become an official member of the International Confederation of World Nature Protection Associations.
- Mongolia's livestock population topped 31.3 million heads according to the SSO. This broke down into 355,100 camels, 2.9 million horses, 3.6 million cows, 14.1 million sheep and 10.3 million goats. The decline in the camel population in 14 aimags is of concern.
- The Democratic Coalition defended its record to date, claiming it had fulfilled one third of its Contract with the Voters. Since being elected in 1996, the government had passed 189 laws, rescinded 13 and issued 183 decrees.
- ♦ A Cameroonian national infected with AIDS was deported from Mongolia on January 7.

### February 1998

- Satoma-Oil, a Mongolian and American Joint Venture, exported its first batch of 350 barrels of oil extracted from a field in Tamsag, Dornod to China.
- The Government's "Green Revolution" kicks off, with the intention to dramatically increase the quantity of fruits and vegetables grown in Mongolia and to reduce dependence on foreign imports.
- The Youth-21 Ecoforum on Sustainable Development was organized by MAP-21, the Mongolian Youth Association and other NGOs.
- ♦ The Erdenet copper mine board decides to extend director general, Sh.Otgonbileg's term by three months until May 25.
- An agreement between the Mongolian and South Korean governments allows 500 Mongolians to work in Korea for a twoyear stint.

- The Buyant-Ukhaa airport in Ulaanbaatar, thanks to the Asian Development Bank, now has two fire trucks where it had none before.
- ♦ Canada opened its first diplomatic mission in Mongolia and plans are under way to open a Mongolian consulate in Canada's financial capital, Toronto. The Canada Fund is spending US \$100,000 on projects in Mongolia and 10 Canadian mining companies are employing 500 Mongolians.
- Workers at Mongolia's largest industrial enterprise Erdenet copper mine - walk off the job on February 23. The dispute erupted over rival candidates for membership of the board controlling the Mongolian-Russian joint venture. Erdenet accounts for one fourth of Mongolia's state budget and 50 per cent of its exports.

## March 1998

- President N. Bagabandi makes an official visit to Kazakhstan, Kuwait and Turkey with an entourage of 20 people, including highranking officials and businessmen.
- Mongolian United Movement members, with their head G. Boshigt, started a sit-in at Sukhbaatar Square, blaming the Parliament and government for betraying promises made to the people.
- ♦ Three infants die and dozens of others are seriously ill due to the spread of sepsis at Maternity Ward No.1. An estimated 40 babies are being treated for the disease.
- \* It is announced by the National TB Centre that Mongolia has one of the world's highest rates of tuberculosis infection. In 1995 Mongolia had 124.9 TB infections per 100,000 people the fifth highest level in the world. To date 98.2 per cent of the country's 3,600 TB patients are receiving treatment in hospital.

## April 1998

- ♦ The government formed by Prime Minister M. Enkhsaihan resigns. Ts. Elbegdorj, the leader of the Democratic Union Coalition (Mongolian National Democratic Party and the Mongolian Social Democratic Party) and Parliamentary deputy speaker, takes over as Prime Minister of Mongolia.
- ♦ A Federation of Mongolian Trade Unions demonstration called for better wages, benefits, vacations and an improved social welfare policy. The demonstration arose from the Parliament's decision to postpone allowances and benefits issued from the social insurance and social welfare fund. The on-going demonstrations by the Mongolian United Movement, led by G. Boshigt, remained defiant. They demanded a response from the President, Parliament and the Government to their 23-point petition.
- Severe storms in the western aimags killed two people, 43,500 animals, destroyed 1,200 dwellings and buildings and several electronic stakes. Total damages were estimated at Tg 1.4 billion.
- Over 100 guns capable of firing rubber bullets were distributed to environmental control officers across Mongolia. Poaching and illegal logging are on the rise, as well as assaults on park staff.
- The number of Mongolians donating blood declined dramatically in the first quarter of 1998. Officials pin the plunge down to increased fears of HIV infection in the wake of several highly publicized cases.
- ♦ Health organizations won the right to make money after members of the State Ikh Hural social policy standing committee voted against adding the words "non-profit" to the definition of health organizations in the proposed health law.

### May 1998

 US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright paid a seven-hour visit to Mongolia on May 2 and praised the country as being

- "independent and peaceful, proud and free." She noted that trade doubled with the US in 1997 but at US \$50.9 million it still lagged behind Russia, China and Switzerland.
- ♦ President N.Bagabandi made an official visit to Japan from May 13-18 through the invitation of the Japanese government.
- ♦ Newly-appointed Minister of Finance, B.Batbayar, adopts resolution 80 on May 27, merging the bankrupt state-owned Reconstruction Bank with the private Golomt Bank.
- ♦ In the same week that MIAT, the national airline, celebrated its 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary with the introduction of an Airbus 300 to its fleet, a Chinese-built Yu-12 plane crashed killing all aboard. Twenty-eight crew and passengers perished, including 16 adults, seven children and five teenagers. The Yu-12 has a poor safety record in Mongolia but no cause has yet been determined for the crash. An investigation continues.
- Spring fires continued to burn across many parts of Mongolia, though officials say most of the blazes were extinguished. So far in 1998, 91 steppe and forest fires have been reported in 12 aimags.
- ♦ Mongol TV began night broadcasts on May 2, extending its evening broadcasting schedule until 1 a.m. The late-night lineup begins with the 11 o'clock news and features sports and entertainment programming between midnight and 1 a.m, including a popular Disco TV show.
- ♦ Mongol Telecom (MONTEL) reported profits of Tg 3.6 billion in 1997, two-and-a-half times the previous year's level. The state-run company is 40 per cent owned by Korea Telecom.
- ♦ The government allocated Tg 410 million (US \$512,000) from the central budget to repair the damage caused by wind and dust storms in the western aimags. Total damages were estimated at Tg 1.4 billion (US \$1.7 million). The spring storms in which winds reached 162 kilometres per hour, claimed the lives of two people and 43,500 livestock and levelled 1,200 gers.

♦ Anti-government protestors blocked downtown roads in Ulaanbaatar on May 19. The protest was organized by the Mongolian United Movement and consisted mainly of pensioners demanding the resignation of the government. MUM is facing a lawsuit by the city for obstructing traffic.

## June 1998

- ♦ MIAT general director, Ch. Alexander, stepped down on June 5 along with G. Ganbaatar of the Civil Aviation Authority, in the wake of the May plane crash. Alexander was replaced by former Infrastructure Minister, G. Nyamdavaa.
- An International Investors Forum on Agro-Industry and Tourism took place during June 24-26, involving over 200 foreign and 500 domestic representatives.
- Parliament was paralyzed by a two-day debate and a subsequent walk-out by the opposition over charges that resolution 80 on the bank merger was illegal.
- Over 13 000 firearms were legally imported into Mongolia between 1995 and June 1998, pushing up the total of firearms to 45 000.

## July 1998

- ♦ MPRP candidate, D. Tseveenjav, wins a by-election with 70.8 per cent of the vote. It is the third by-election in a row the MPRP has won since the general election two years ago.
- The newly appointed Government resigned on July 25 after a secret poll; 42 members or 56 per cent voted for the government resignation and 33 against.
- As part of a scheme to fight desertification in the Gobi desert border town of Zamyn-Uud, the Ministry of Environment plans to spend Tg 80 million (US \$100,000) to transport sand dunes five kilometres outside the city.

- Long-awaited new ID cards for Mongolians were delayed until the government transferred funds to the British company making the cards. The new ID cards are to replace passports and will reintroduce Mongol family names in addition to given and paternal names.
- ♦ A US \$30 million World Bank project will tackle electricity waste in the capital. According to the head of the power authority, Mr. Erdenbileg, 13 -14 per cent is squandered because of poor technology and another 30 per cent is pilfered by consumers.
- Heavy rains and flooding across the country claimed 12 lives and provided a stark contrast to the drought-like conditions that started the summer.

## August 1998

- President Bagabandi intervenes in a two-week-long hunger strike by the Mongolian United Youth Movement, calling for it to end and the protestors to use legal channels. Under an agreement with acting Prime Minister, Ts. Elbegdorj, the protest stopped with a pledge from the government to pay more attention to social policy.
- ♦ A private members' bill in the Parliament calls for a 15 per cent tariff on all imported foodstuffs between September 1 and April 1. The bill hopes to protect the domestic food industry.
- An amendment to the education law makes it compulsory for Mongolian children to start school at age six. Mongolians currently begin first grade at age eight, one of the highest schoolstarting ages in the world.
- The power authority announces it will cut electricity supplies to recalcitrant debtors starting August 15. The Authority said it had no choice, stating repairs and winter preparations had stopped and that a debt of US \$14 million was still outstanding. 70 per cent of power users in Darkhan, Baganuur, Erdenet and the ger istricts of Ulaanbaatar experienced cut-offs.

• A disabled man sets himself alight on August 13 during a demonstration in Freedom Square. Ts. Jambal doused himself in petrol and ignited it. He suffered burns to his legs and said he could not survive on Tg 6,420 a month while supporting a wife and three children.

# September 1998

- 1
- ♦ The media landscape is set for a major shake-up with the passing of the long-awaited media law on August 28. The state-owned newspapers Zasgyn Gazrin Medee and Ardyn Erkh Mongolia's most widely read paper are to be abolished under the law. The law, designed to promote democracy and pluralism in society, bans state ownership and state control of the media. Newspapers and radio stations supported by local governors will also be affected as well as the giant national broadcaster Mongol TV and Radio. The law will take effect on January 1, 1999.
- Mongolian Traditional United Party MP, O. Dashbalbar, has suggested that debt evaders be strung from a pole. "Let's execute them if necessary," he said to Parliament.
- ♦ The national oil-import company, NIC hiked prices by 12.5 per cent starting September 2.
- Over 30 agencies, studios and publishers have joined the newly formed Mongolian Advertising Association. The advocacy group chose Foreign Investment Board chief, D. Jargalsaikhan, as its first president.
- Mongolia will have an open market with regards to both Internet providers and cellular phones as of January 1, 1999. The Mobicom cell phone company will lose its monopoly status, as well as, the Datacom Internet provider.

## October 1998

♦ Sanjaasuren Zorig, the democracy campaigner turned politician, was murdered upon his return to his apartment on October 2.

# Politics, Economy and Society

**Three** 

# **Political Changes**

By the middle of January the Parliament approved elected MPs being members of the Cabinet; a move that was to have profound significance for the Enksaikhan government in the months to come. The Mongolian 1992 constitution prohibited members of the State Ikh Hural from taking on other state duties. An amendment to the law on MPs' legal status adopted earlier by this Parliament interprets the edict to mean that – unlike in most parliamentary democracies – MPs cannot serve in the Cabinet.

In February the leaders of the governing coalition partners – the National Democratic Party and the Mongolian Social Democratic Party – appealed for a merger. Opinion varied widely on the reason for the proposed merger, with some seeing it as a sign of political crisis while others see it more like a natural evolution for two parties with similar ideologies. The Social Democrats were also being wooed by the opposition Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party to form powerful centre-left bloc. Rumours were also starting about a Russian-style overhaul of the Cabinet.

In a bizarre move on March 27, the general council of the Mongolian National Democratic Party voted for the resignation of its government. The suggestion came from party president and Deputy Speaker, Ts. Elbegdorj, soon to supercede Prime Minister, Enkhsaikhan. At the time, Elbegdorj suggested that the Coalition government's current low public approval came down to a lack of coordination between the government and the State Ikh Hural. "The government has not acted in line with the wishes of the Parliament and should resign," he said at the time. Parliament

resumed on April 6 after a two-and-half month break during which fissures in the Coalition appeared. Prime Minister, Enkhsaikhan, complained that a faction in the party was trying to oust him. He was right. On April 17, a day after an extraordinary joint meeting of the ruling councils of the MNDP and MSDP, Prime Minister, Enkhsaikhan, handed his resignation to President, N. Bagabandi. It was approved by the State Ikh Hural on April 22 by a vote of 591. Ten MPs boycotted the session, saying the move was unconstitutional.

The resignation provoked mixed reactions amongst Mongolians. Some felt it would speed up the pace of reform. Others saw it as a grab for power by a faction in the Coalition, or worried about the lack of experience of a Cabinet of MPs.

#### Youngest PM

The new Prime Minister, Ts. Elbegdorj, took office on April 23, vowing to chart the same economic course as his predecessor, and to operate a more open and transparent government. Although he replaced a number of senior civil servants, he said he would not make changes to the structure of the nine government Ministries.

He vowed to press forward with a busy spring session, in which a number of bills central to the government's programme — including a new law on foreign investment and a long-awaited media law — were slated to be passed.

But he immediately ran into trouble. Elbegdorj nominated his nine-member Cabinet April 27, but only five of the nominees received the approval of Parliament. The process came to border on farce, as nominee after nominee was shot down in the State Ikh Hural. The last Minister — Education Minister Ch. Saikhanbileg — was not approved until May 28. He was the fifth nominee put forward for the post. The local media expressed concern about the average age of 35.8. In place at last, some people began to worry about its lack of experience.

Then, at the beginning of June, the 25 Opposition MPs began a boycott in protest over the government-approved merger of the 18-month-old state-owned Sergeen Bosgoltyn (Reconstruction) Bank

with the private Golomt Bank. The merger, which the government carried out with the backing of international financial institutions, was necessary, said the Finance Minister. The Reconstruction Bank was insolvent, with 70 per cent of its Tg 11.2 billion (U.S. \$13.7 million) in outstanding loans classed as unreliable.

The Opposition labelled the merger a "conspiracy", charging the government with driving the bank to its doom by racking up Tg 8.7 billion (\$10.5 million) in debts and pointing to links between the Golomt Bank and members of the National Democratic Party.

The result was a Parliament paralysed for all of June. Key bills — including the foreign investment bill slated to be approved before a June 24-26 investors' conference in Ulaanbaatar — languished.

#### Government Minister Murdered

The crisis deepened when a large majority of an all-party task force appointed to investigate the merger, ruled that the move was improper. The President warned that if the impasse was not resolved soon, he would have no choice but to dissolve the State Ikh Hural and call an early election.

"Even if the government resigns or there is a new election, it will not mean that Mongolia will reverse its chosen path," Prime Minister, Elbegdorj, told journalists on June 18. "The people have already made their choice."

On July 25 Prime Minister, Ts. Elbegdorj, and his entire cabinet resigned after a secret poll, with 56 per cent of MPs voting for the Government's resignation. On October 2, one of the founders of the democratic movement and acting minister for infrastructure development, S. Zorig, was murdered on returning to his apartment. At the time of writing the Parliament was still searching for a replacement Prime Minister to form a new governmen, and Zorig was hinted at being a contender.

The opposition MPRP further distanced itself from the past by adopting in May a new logo. Replacing the traditional communist red star with a red rose – the international emblem of social democracy – and a yin-yang symbol, expressing the creative and receptive forces of nature. The party also passed a resolution expressing "deep regret" for the "tragic" purges of the 1930s and 0s, in which as many as 30,000 Mongolians died.

## Major Legislation

The autumn session of the Parliament came to a close on January 23, 1998. It was a busy session with 91 laws adopted out of a total 172 draft laws and 60 resolutions. Thirty new laws were adopted, 52 were amendments to existing laws, and eight invalidated old laws. They included issues relating to social problems, reforms to social policy, a law on the five-day work week and legislation defining the minimum subsistence level and the minimum wage. The 1998 spring session started on April 5 and planned to adopt 43 draft laws. By July 1, nine laws were drafted, four were amended and one invalidated an old law. The legislative agenda was slowed down by the change in prime ministers, and the on-going political crisis surrounding controversies like the much-criticized Golomt and Reconstruction Bank merger.

The priorities for 1998 include health care, medications, hygiene and sanitation, science and technology, national security and mobilization. According to the plan, the following draft laws will be debated: state budget, administration and financing of state organizations, mass media and freedom of information, elections and lobbying.

In late January, the Prevention of Crime law went into effect. It prohibits the media from publishing details of crimes and criminal trials. Supporters of the law say the plethora of newspapers and TV programmes reporting on crime are actually encouraging it. Critics of the law claimed it was a step backwards to state censorship and that out of sight does not necessarily mean out of mind.

In September, the Media Law was passed. It removes the state from any involvement in the media as of January 1, 1999. This affects newspapers and the leviathan state broadcaster, Mongol TV and Radio

# The Economy - Inflation

Macro economic indicators showed some very encouraging results in 1997. The State Statistics Office showed inflation dropping from over 300 per cent only several years ago, to 17.5 per cent for the year. According to former Minister of Finance, P.Tsagaan, 'The liberalization of prices, the abolition of import taxes, a deep restructuring process in the banking and financial sector, changes to the tax system and a strict credit policy conditioned the decrease of inflation down to 17.5 per cent per annum. The GDP increased by 3.3 per cent per annum.' Others attributed the lowering inflation rate to the reduced purchasing power of the population.

By July 1998, inflation had dropped below ten per cent for the first time since Mongolia's transition to a market economy,

# Impact of Asian Crisis on Mongolia's Economy

"When the crisis first hit Asia in October 1997, Mongolia expected it would be immune from its effects. But the Asian economic crisis finally began to filter down to Mongolia. It has resulted in a flood of cheap imported goods from South-East Asia, with no equal export market." said Prime Minister Ts. Elbegdori in June.

Generally, external economic influences exacerbated the imbalance of exports and imports, causing a decline in economic growth and an overburdening of the state budget. Imports thrice outpaced exports, which resulted in a currency shortage.

As of June 1998, the external turnover deficit increased to US \$89.9 million, a figure that is US S70 million higher than the previous year. It was projected to generate income of Tg 121,2 billion by June of this year; however, only Tg 89.2 billion was transferred, producing a Tg 32 billion gap in the budget.

While some predicted a banking crisis, things have not developed as the pessimists imagined. Individual deposits increased almost two-fold in 1997. But, until June 1998, total deposits decreased by Tg 15 billion, resulting from deposit withdrawals.

The price of copper, Mongolia's largest foreign-currency earner, fell by nearly a quarter in the first four months of 1998 due to the Asian financial crisis. Prices for cashmere and gold, major exports for Mongolia, also declined.

according to the SSO. This was attributed to a tough monetary policy and limits on credits to banks and the government.

The consumer price index (CPI) increased for housing, fuel and electricity by 50.7 per cent, clean water per capita by two-fold, goods and services and education by 41.4 per cent, clothes, shoes and cotton materials by 30.5 per cent and medicine, vaccines and medical services by 26.6 per cent.

Commodities and servbices, Measuring unit General Index I. Foodstuff		End of 1996 MNT	End of 1997 MNT	*June 1998% End of 1997 109.2%
Rice	(kg)	390.0	360.0	100%
Mutton	(grade 1, kg)	550.0	595.0	181.5%
Beef	(grade 1, kg)	650.0	650.0	164.6%
Milk	(litre)	350.0	450.0	65.3%
Sugar	(kg)	526.0	555.0	84.5%
Potato	(kg)	295.0	255.0	135.7%
Onion	(kg)	450.0	590.0	159.3%
Vegetable oil		1620.0	1400.0	98.6%
Eggs	(piece)	117.0	125.0	100%
Alcohol	(domestic, 0.51)	1920.0	2500.0	95.8%
Electricity	heating and		4	
Monthly housing space fees (1sq.m)		80.0		later for the
Monthly heating fees (1sq.m)		48.0		
Monthly water use per capita		180.0		
Electricity (1 Kilo Watt)		18.2	35.2	100%
Bus fare		100.0	100.0	100%

Source: State Statistical Office report.

9.2 per cent; for 1997 it was 28.9 per cent. In March of 1998, due to meat price increases of between 30 and 40 per cent, the CPI grew by 4.2 per cent compared with February 1998.

<sup>\*</sup>Comparing June 1998 with the end of 1997. The difference is shown in percentages.

In accordance with the September 1997 report of the State Statistical Office, the average household monetary income for urban areas was Tg 63,900, and in rural areas Tg 48,400. The average household monetary expenditures reached Tg 62,500 in urban areas, and Tg 48,500 in rural areas.

#### Household monetary income composition

End of 1996	End of 1997	Description of composition	
27.9%	27.6%	Wages and salaries	
5.9%	7.0%	Pensions and allowances	
47.2%	47.1%	Individual income	
19.0%	18.3%	Other	

### Household monetary expenditures composition

End of 1996	End of 1997	Description of composition
45.0%	44.0%	Expenditures on food total
42.5%	43.4%	Non-food expentures
12.4%	12.5%	Expenditures on service
0.1%	0.1%	Deposits

Source: State Statistical Office report.

# Impact of Russian Crisis on Mongolia's Economy

In May Russian coal miners blocked the Trans-Siberian train that passes through Ulaanbaatar on its way to China. The blockade was lifted on May 24. In August a severe benzene shortage hit Mongolia and prompted the re-introduction of rationing. At its worst all gas supplies were pulled back to the capital, leaving many in the country stranded and unable to drive cars and run gas-powered electricity generators. At the time of writing the situation had improved but rationing was still in place in many parts of the country. The delays

were attributed to job actions by Russian workers.

The Mongolian stock exchange got the jitters after Russia's government announced that it would allow the rouble to float—or sink—on August 17. Share prices soon levelled off and Mongol Bank officials said the country had been largely immune to the troubles in Russia, Russia accounts for 30 per cent of Mongolia's imports and 13.5 per cent of its exports.

## Exchange Rate

The national currency, the tugrug, stabilized its exchange rate with foreign currencies in 1998. During the last eight months of 1997, the average monthly fluctuation in the exchange rate ranged within 0.37 per cent.

Market exchange rate by October 1998: US \$1=Tg 855

End of 1996	End of 1997	June 1997	March 1998	June 1998
693.51	812.20	797.99	817.61	838.63

The Bank of Mongolia posted in June 1998 the following rates for buying foreign currencies: DM 463.59; JPY 5.90; CHF 549.96; GBP 1393.38 and HKD 108.28.

## Monetary and Banking Developments

The Bank of Mongolia maintained a tight monetary policy in 1997, aimed at reducing inflation and stabilizing the currency. This tight monetary policy continued in 1998, the hallmark of this policy is the policy of monetary management through reserve money. The coordination of monetary policy instruments has been based on factors affecting the economy, including demand and supply. As a result of these activities, the inflation rate declined three times in 1997 from 1996. This price stability has been a significant achievement, which established a strong foundation for economic growth and an increase in real income.

The Bank of Mongolia reported at the end of May 1998 that the total money supply had reached Tg 166.4 billion, when at the end of the previous year it was Tg 170.06 billion. Individual deposits reached Tg 54.9 billion by the end of 1997, and Tg 52.3 billion by June 1998. Interest rates for medium term domestic currency deposits are fixed between 12 and 42.6 per cent in 1998, and 1.2 and 26.8 per cent for foreign currency deposits. In the previous year it was 6 to 69.6 per cent and 3.7 to 42.6 per cent repectively.

The solvency of the national commercial banks increased two-fold in 1997. The net international reserve reached in 1997 US \$107.15

million – a figure twice that of 1996. This was due to gold reserves surpassing 8,000 kg of pure gold, 48.4 per cent more than 1996. As of June 1998, the net international reserve is US \$69.17 million. Outstanding loans stood at Tg 50.3 billion at the end of 1997, marking a 22.2 per cent decrease against 1996. It was Tg 74 billion as of June 1998.

The Debt Collection Service collected Tg 5.4 billion in 1997, and plans to bring back another Tg 5 billion this year.

In conformity with its 1998 work plan, the Bank of Mongolia desires to keep inflation no higher than 20 per cent; increases in money supply no lower than 25 per cent; and net foreign currency reserves to reach US \$80 million.

In the framework of the government's monetary policy, the following will be done this year: bank restructuring, increasing bank solvency and current capital, restoring inter-bank mutual trust and monetary market operation, defending consumer rights, maintaining competition as well as implementing bank privatization.

A Value Added Tax was introduced as of July 1, and then raised from 10 to 13 per cent. The new tax is to meet International Monetary Fund conditions. The Consumers' Rights Association said costs are rising because of the VAT. They pointed to the 30 per cent hike in domestic airfares, petrol hikes and a 20 per cent increase for milk products.

## Foreign Aid and Investment

The October 1997 Tokyo International Donor Meeting saw pledges of US \$250 million in loans and grants being made – an amount equal to the state budget revenue of Mongolia. Most of the donors contribute to infrastructure development, namely highways and transportation, power stations and communication.

Since 1991, loans to the Mongolian Government reached US \$560 million, most being long-term, low interest loans. In 1997, foreign grants reached Tg 6.3 billion.

It was revealed by the government that only five per cent of foreign aid is spent on the social sector. Of US \$180 million in aid slated for 1998, 30 per cent will go to mining, 27 per cent to energy, 19 per cent to transport, eight per cent to communications, five per cent to social security and three per cent to other areas.

Japan continued to hold its status as Mongolia's largest bilateral donor. A record US \$20 million was pledged for 1998. USAID is spending US \$2.2 million on diesel power generators to non-grid power stations in five aimags.

# Reconstruction Bank/Golomt Bank Merger

At the beginning of June 1998, 25 Opposition MPs began a boycott in protest over the governmentapproved merger of the 18-monthold state-owned Sergeen Bosgoltyn (Reconstruction) Bank with the private Golomt Bank, The merger on May 27 was carried out by the government with the backing of international financial institutions. including the World Bank. Finance Minister Bathayar defended the move as necessary because the Reconstruction Bank was insolvent. with 70 per cent of its Tg 11.2 billion (U.S. \$13.7 million) in outstanding loans classed as unreliable.

The opposition labelled the merger a "conspiracy", charging the government with driving the bank to its doom by racking up Tg 8.7 billion (US \$10.5 million) in debts, and pointing to links between the Golomt Bank and members of the National Democratic Party.

The result was a Parliament paralysed for all of June. Key billsincluding the foreign investment bill slated to be approved before a June 24-26 investors' conference in Ulaanbaatar - languished.

The crisis deepened when a large majority of an all-party task force appointed to investigate the merger, ruled the move was improper.

The President warned that if the impasse was not resolved soon, he would have no choice but to dissolve the State Ikh Hural and call an early election.

The government passed another resolution (114) to uncouple the merged banks and return the Reconstruction Bank to state ownership. The resolution "added fuel to the fire", neither placating the opposition nor salving the political crisis. In fact the move was perceived by the opposition as further proof of a weak government.

On July 25, under a Parliamentary secret no-confidence vote of MPs-42 for and 33 against - the government resigned. The German Reconstruction Bank extended to Mongolia a soft loan of DM 15 million to overhaul the power station in Choibalson, Dornod aimag. In June the Foreign Credit and Aid Coordinating Unit was replaced by the Foreign Investment, Credit and Aid Coordinating Unit based at the Foreign Relations Ministry.

Under an Asian Development Bank project, the French firm Alcatel is replacing 150 kilometres of telephone cable in Ulaanbaatar, Darhan and Erdenet. It says 50,000 new customers will be hooked up to the phone system as a result of the US \$21 million scheme.

Mongolia spent US \$108.9 million in loans and grants from donors in 1998 as of November, of more than US \$205 million committed. The Government established the Foreign Investment and Loan Coordination Council in an attempt to streamline the use of incoming foreign funds.

### Fiscal Situation

Total state budget revenues for 1997 were Tg 207.5 billion (excluding grants), of which 5.1 per cent was the current revenue; 83.8 per cent or Tg 165.5 billion and 16.2 per cent or Tg 31.8 billion were tax and non-tax revenue repectively. The total budget expenditures reached Tg 298.5 billion (excluding net lending), of which 65.9 per cent were current expenditures, and 34.1 per cent were capital expenditure. The total budget deficit stood at Tg 90.9 billion. The State Property Committee contributed Tg 13.4 billion to the state budget, and grants Tg 6.1 billion.

For 1998, state budget revenues are projected to reach Tg 214.9 billion and expenditures Tg 293.9 billion, with the deficit standing at Tg 79 billion. Budget revenues are to be derived from tax income of Tg 143.8 billion, non-tax income of Tg 45.9 billion, privatization income of Tg 16 billion, and foreign loans and grants of Tg 9.1 billion.

According to state budget projections for 1998, the highest subsidy

to a local budget will be given to Gobi-Altai, at Tg 2.3 billion, and the lowest is Gobi-Sumber, with Tg 609 million.

As of June 1998, total revenuse and grants reached Tg 102.3 billion for the general government budget, of which Tg 77.3 billion went to the central governmental, and Tg 26.8 billion to local government budgets.

Foreign-currency reserves shrunk by a quarter since the beginning of 1998. Mongol Bank figures set the reserves at the end of the first half of 1998 at US \$75.7 million, \$15.7 million more than a year ago. But the fund is down from a high of US \$100 million at the beginning of the year. Due to drops in world prices for cashmere and copper, the government has been forced to sell off large chunks of foreign currency to keep the tugrug stable.

#### Industrial and Real Sector Developments

Despite modest gains in 1996/97, industrial productivity in 1998 was 46.1 per cent lower than in 1989, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry. Coal production was down 38.5 per cent, cement 40.4 per cent, glass and chinaware 96.6 per cent, building materials 53 per cent, leather goods 97 per cent and sheepskin goods 98 per cent.

## Construction Sector

In 1997, 820 housing apartments worth Tg 7.2 billion were built. Construction and capital repair worth Tg 44.4 billion was done by domestic and foreign companies, a Tg 5 billion increase in money being spent, but a five per cent decrease in construction work being completed against 1996.

As of June 1998, construction and capital repair worth Tg 17.2 billion was done. Total construction work performance is impeded by poor investment in upgrading skills and equipment.

#### **Gross Industrial Production**

The State Statistical Office reported that in 1997 the industrial sector employed 62,000 persons, with gross industrial output reaching Tg 454.7 billion – a growth of 4.4 per cent or Tg 9 billion against 1996. GDP increased by 3.3 per cent against 1996.

Total output broke down as follows: 58 per cent produced by mining of metal ores, quarrying stone, coal and other mining sector; 17.3 per cent by electricity, thermal energy generation; 13 per cent by manufacturing of food products and beverages; and the remaining parts by other sectors. Production in coal mining, textile sector, clothing, wood, skin and hide processing declined in 1997.

As of June 1998, gross industrial output reached Tg 210.8 billion or 33 per cent of output reached by June 1997.

#### Mining

Mongolian mines delivered 8,902 kilograms of gold to the central bank in 1997 – 2,905 kg more than in 1996.

In May, the Sharyn Gol coal mine – 240 kilometres north of Ulaanbaatar – stopped production for eight days because it could not afford to buy supplies, carry out repairs or pay its workers. Sharyn Gol, which produces a million tonnes of coal a year, is the major supplier to the mammoth Erdenet mining enterprise, power stations in Darkhan and Erdenet cities and Ulaanbaatar's Power Station #3. The mine is owed more than Tg 6 billion (US \$7.5 million) by its customers.

In July, Australia's BHT company claimed it had discovered a copper deposit in Dungov aimag larger than the deposit at the Erdenet mine.

## Service Sector Development

Though statistics are difficult to find, there has been a substantial increase in the service sector, most of it in the capital, Ulaanbaatar.. 1998 will be remembered as the year of renovations and conversions.

Many ground floor apartments and older buildings were spruced up to take on a new life as a shop, restaurant or bar. The range and quality of goods available has also substantially increased. The capital now boasts restaurants selling French, Italian, Indian, Senagalese and American cuisine. Macroeconomic insentives to start businesses are now beginning to pay off. The capital has taken a different hue, buzzing with activity. Outside the capital this service sector revolution hasn't taken off. Mongolians are saying "Everything is available for those who can afford it."

### Foreign Trade Developments

According to a 1997 report by the SSO, total external turnover equaled US \$1.026 billion, of which exports were worth US \$451.5 million and imports US \$574.7 million. The trade deficit stood at US \$123.2 million, a US \$96.6 million or 14.7 per cent increase against 1996. Imports increased by 21 per cent or US \$123.8 billion.

The decrease of exports was caused by an overall fall in export products, with copper concentrate dropping by 2.7 per cent, flourite spar concentrate by 3.6 per cent, goat processed cashmere by 15.2 per cent and non-processed cashmere by 8.3 per cent.

As of June 1998, total turnover equaled US \$371.6 million, including exports of US \$140.9 million, and imports of US \$230.7 million. The deficit stood at US \$89.8 million. Main export markets were Switzerland, China, the Russian Federation, South Korea, USA, Great Britain, Japan, Italy and Germany. In the first five months of 1998, the SSO found that while imports continued to increase, the prices for basic goods were also rising. From January 1 to June 1 of 1998, Mongolia racked up US \$186.2 million in exports, against US \$114.3 million in imports. That's US \$40.3 million less in exports and US \$59.9 million more in imports than in the same period last year. Prices for basic consumer goods rose by 12.2 per cent between December 1997 and June 1998. The production of 88 made-in-Mongolia products increased over 1997. Production of 58 items declined and

10 items previously produced in the country - including matches and batteries - are now to be imported.

The number of foreign joint ventures and wholly owned companies registered in Mongolia now stands at 820.

The head of the Ulaanbaatar Trade Union, Mr. D. Jadambaa, charged in May that too many foreign joint-venture businesses were exploiting Mongolian workers. The Union made an audit of

## Erdenet Plant Director Dilemma

This year saw upheaval at a key Mongolian institution: the Erdenet coppermine, It was revealed the plant had outstanding taxes to the tune of Tg 6.7 billion in 1997, and Tg 6.6 billion as of March 1998, according to the National Tax Office. It paid only Tg 2 billion out of Tg 5 billion in electricity and heating bills. Sh.Otgonbileg, the acting director general of the Erdenet mine, took the blame.

Erdenet brings nearly 20 to 30 per cent of budget revenues. Otgonbileg has been heading the plant since 1989. His four-year contract finished as of February 26, and was extended until May 26 as a result of a meeting of the joint Russian-Mongolian board of directors.

To Organbileg, Erdenet's troubles are due to the plummeting price for copper on the world market. But, an audit by the Audit Commission of the State Property Committee, charged Otgonbileg had violated laws. The State Property Committee was asked by the government to replace the acting director-general.

When naming candidates for the director-general, President N. Bagabandi backed Sh. Otgonbileg, calling him "the best manager and experienced with the plant." This didn't help Otgonbileg, who was seen to be too close to the President and his party, the MPRP. The government proposed D. Dorligjav, the former defense minister.

Finally, D. Dorligjav was appointed as acting director-general, replacing Sh. Otgonbileg, Many of the key issues remain unresolved and the future of the mine is still uncertain. 27 joint-venture companies for compliance with Mongolia's labour laws and safety and sanitation regulations. They claimed to have found 25 infractions of the rules and fined one business Tg 40,000. Jadambaa, however, praised foreign investment and said the government should work together with unions to make sure standards are upheld.

## Agriculture

#### Livestock

The State Statistical Office reported that, out of 31.3 million heads of livestock registered in 1997, there were 14.1 million sheep, 10.2 million goats, 3.6 million cows, 2.9 million horses and 355,400 camels.

Since 1990 livestock increased by 20.9 per cent or 5.4 million heads, in which 5.1 million or 94.9 per cent of the growth is attributed to goats. This is due to increasing interest among herders in producing cashmere for export, despite falling prices.

Statistics for June 1998 show that 80 per cent of 10.4 million breeding stock gave birth, and 9.7 million heads of new-borns survived. Natural losses of adult animals as of June 1998 totalled 2 per cent of total livestock or 6.1 million. The figure for 1997 was 1.5 per cent or 4.5 million.

In July the British ATL company signed a US \$2 million meatprocessing agreement with Mongolia's Nomgon Bar company, to process and market Mongolia's pure, eco-friendly meat using a system of vacuum sealing and refrigerated transportation.

### Crops

#### Green Revolution

The Ministry of Agriculture blamed financial and technical problems for delaying the crop harvest in 1998. Only half of the country's grain- and potatoe-harvesting exquipment has undergone repairs this year. Problems with the Golomt and Reconstruction banks has meant farmers are unable to get loans for much-needed

fuel and parts.

In 1998, the total area sown reached 323,150.9 hectares – 98.3 per cent of 1997's area. Potatoes and vegetables sown this year increased by 122.3 per cent and 146.5 per cent respectively against 1997.

The government's Green Reovolution is said to have involved 70,000 families and 920 businesses planting 10,000 hectares of fruits and vegetables.

Due to a shortage of domestic flour production, 11,000 tonnes of wheat were donated by the US Government to Mongolia at the end of 1997.

Mongolia spends US \$40 million a year to import vegetables. In August 1998 the US government announced it was going to donate 24 tonnes of wheat valued at US \$5 million to Mongolia. Mongolia will ship US \$6 million worth of meat and fluorspar to Russia in 1998, as payment for outstanding debts to its northern neighbour.

## Privatization

The State Property Committee called 1997 a huge success in Mongolia's ongoing efforts to privatize business. Some 212 economic entities, including 97 state companies, were sold during the first phase of a three-year privatization programme, contributing Tg 13.4 billion to the state budget. These included 20,267 apartments. Sales of small- and medium-sized business was most effective.

The Committee sold 14 crop-farming enterprises at an open bid in 1997. Privatization of the remaining 40 enterprises on the list is planned for this year.

The Property Privatization Board transferred Tg 6.7 billion to the central government budget, and Tg 444.3 million to the local government budget as of June 30, 1998. Thirty-seven auctions

were organized in Ulaanbaatar, in which six properties, 29 economic entities, three limited companies were sold. One third, or 25,000 apartments out of a total 75,000, were privatized.

Local privatizations brought in by June 1998 Tg 787.9 million to the state budget.

In the area of land privatization, the government has promised it only affect 0.6 per cent of the country. Pasture land, Special Protected Areas and land regarded as public property would be exempt from privatization.

By May 1998 the Government admitted privatization was going slowly. As of that date, only 390 of 1,114 entities slated for privatization since 1996 have been sold off. Privatization of the largest businesses began in March 1998, but most of the larger entities – including the state airline MIAT and Gobi Cashmere – remain in government hands. High price tags and operating costs deter would-be buyers. Both the high-rise Ardyn Bank building and the State Department Store have failed to shift despite repeated attempts at auction.

By September 1998, 50,000 families became homeowners since housing privatization was introduced in 1997.

## Social Issues

### Unemployment

Official statistics registered 63,600 unemployed people at the labor exchange at the end of 1997, and 55,800 as of June 1998. The unemployment rate totaled 7.6 per cent at the end of 1997, with 25.5 per cent or the highest unemployment in Dornod aimag

The number of unemployed entering the workforce is 10,800 as of June 1998. The number of unemployed newly registered in the first six months of 1998 decreased by 12,003 from 21,673 in 1997. The Ministry of Health's Labour Coordinating Office estmated that more than 200,000 people – 20 per cent of the working-age population – do not have formal jobs. The number of Mongolians officially registered as unemployed as of June stands at 62,200.

Nearly two-thirds of the officially unemployed have no professional training.

Women account for 48 per cent of Mongolian workers, or 363,831 of the country's 756,043 working people. But they make up 51 per cent of the registered unemployed, or 31,208 of 61, 504.

Poverty

Official statistics at the end of 1997 showed the number of poor in the country had reached 587,741, comprising 149,647 households. The poverty level is 24.6 per cent of the population. 142,300 poor or 26,189 households live in Ulaanbaatar, while 56,328 poor – the highest number outside of Ulaanbaatar -live in Huvsgul aimag. 40.6 per cent of the poor are neither employed nor in school; 23.6 per cent are single-mother parents. The number of single-mother households in the country reached 51,700, showing a 12.4 per cent increase against 1996. Out of the poor population, 46.6 per cent are children under 16, 45.8 per cent are working age, and 7.6 per cent are elderly.

The minimum subsistence level (MSL) has not been revised since February 1997.

The number of Mongolians leaving the countryside for Ulaanbaatar in search of economic opportunities is increasing. In the first half of 1998, 6,518 people – most of them between the ages of 18 and 39 – resettled in the capital. That's 60 per cent more than in the same period last year. Faced with overloaded social services and rising unemployment, the Ulaanbaatar government is keen to curb this mushrooming of the city's

# Partnership for Progress Update

Four

population. Official figures say the capital is home to 640,000 people, but unofficial estimates go as high as 1 million. It costs Tg 26,000 (US \$32) to register as an Ulaanbaatar citizen and receive social benefits.

The United Nations Development Programme has been a supporter of Mongolia's development efforts since the 1970s. A new five-year programme (1997 to 2001) called the Partnership for Progress, is into its second year. These UNDP activities support the Mongolian Government's Programme of Action (November, 1996), with its priority on economic growth under difficult transition conditions.

This year has seen a number of landmark activities. The United Nations as a system has signed with the Mongolian Government a Memorandum of Understanding on youth issues. Two more MOUs are due to be signed on Food Security and Nutrition and Human Rights. At UNDP, the priority has been to assist the Mongolian Government in the development of a relevant social policy to meet the challenges of free markets and democracy. This has entailed close consultation with the government, most particularly in the frequent visits of a Japanese specialist on human development. Work is under way on the 1999 Mongolian Human Development Report (the first was published in 1997). The Government has chosen the theme "Human Development and Government Services" for this report.

# **Human Development**

#### Microcredit experience in Mongolia

UNDP is spending US \$1 million to kick off the microfinance experience in Mongolia for the first time. The project, signed in June 1997, is underway with the executing agency ACDI/VOCA, a US microfinance consulting firm.

Main outputs of the project include a national microfinance institution (MFI) providing technical service to other MFIs and loans; at least five local professional MFIs; 7,500 loans being disbursed; and a target of 50 percent women beneficiaries by the end of the project.

#### Support to formulation of social policy in Mongolia

Last year the Mongolian Government took decisive steps in the reform process in governance and macroeconomy. UNDP Mongolia is working to assist the government in identifying viable social policy options to balance these economic reforms. A preparatory report has been prepared by Professor Ryokichi Hirono, a well-known Japanese economist. UNDP Mongolia is leading an effort with the Government, UNICEF and Save the Children Fund (UK) to identify options for the development of a new national social policy framework. The policy options uphold sustainable human development paradigms and are consistent with the nation's ongoing political and economic reforms. The inputs from UNDP and UNICEF on this review of social policy options support national and international consultants, various workshops and training.

The review exercise will be conducted in two phases, incorporating social policy options and a national social policy framework. It is foreseen that the recommendations will be finalized in September 1998.

The issue was also broadly discussed at the 5<sup>th</sup> forum of the Economic Club (under UNDP's Economic and Social Growth Think Tank Project).

# Helping to renovate the wheat seed pool in Mongolia for sustainable food security

UNDP's Emergency Production of High Quality Wheat Seed and New Variety Testing Project has allocated US \$100,000 for the purchase of high quality wheat seed from Kazakhstan. The present wheat seed pool in Mongolia is at six to seven generations, consequently, the productive quality is low. For the purpose of rejuvenating the seed pool, about 200 tonnes of high quality wheat seed were imported. The seed was distributed to 11 private sector cereal farms for multiplication purposes under the supervision of a local consultancy company. In autumn, 400 tonnes of the high quality seed will be put into the seed revolving fund. This is a critical initiative to boost food security in line with the priorities and market reforms of Mongolia.

#### Support to Mongolia's 1998 Green Revolution

With the help of UNDP's funds, 10,000 households in Ulaanbaatar City were provided with instruction booklets on how to grow fruits and vegetables. In connection with the national Green Revolution programme of the Mongolian Government, UNDP is spending US \$20,000 from its seed project to help purchase vegetable and fruit seeds and seedlings. In order to ensure the successful delivery of the support, the Poverty Alleviation Study Centre, an emerging national NGO, has been contracted for the job.

## <u>Support to formulation of water and sanitation policy in</u> Mongolia

Under UNDP's WASH-21 project (National Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education for the 21st Century), a study to tour to India took place in the framework of water and sanitation policy review and formulation. The tour focused on water and sanitation policy and management issues, with cost-sharing by UNDP and SIDA. As well, a full-scale policy formulation workshop will take place at the beginning of July, and the first draft of the policy will be presented to the Government of Mongolia in September 1998.

# **Environment and Natural Resource Management**

MAP-21 for the 21<sup>±</sup> century is adopted

As the follow-up to Mongolia's commitment to the Rio de Janeiro Agenda-21, the Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st century (MAP-21) was launched at a national summit. The National Sustainable Development Action Programme incorporates the Sustainable Development Action Programmes of the 21 provinces. During the Summit, the 40-page executive summary was launched in both English and Mongolian. The summary lays out the national development strategy and how the Government and civil society can work together. Mongolia's Business Council for Sustainable Development was established to support among other things MAP-21. The Council will be promoting the benefits of sustainable development to the private sector.

#### Support to biodiversity conservation

The fragile steppe grasslands of Eastern Mongolia, considered a global treasure, will become a protected area under a new sevenyear, UNDP project signed with the Government of Mongolia. The over US \$6 million project, "Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia", is intended to prevent the unsustainable exploitation of the animals, plants and ecosystems of an area that is being targetted for oil exploration and mining. This innovative project will involve local people as environmental custodians, weaving the goals of environmental protection into sustainable livelihoods. Local governments in three provinces will receive support to incorporate biodiversity into local planning. Any profits from economic activities in the buffer zones will be plowed back into a Community Fund to be used by citizens. The Mongolian government hopes to increase the amount of territory under protection from 11.6 per cent to 15 per cent by the year 2000.

UNDP is working in partnership with the US Peace Corps, three Mongolian ecotourism companies and the governments of Finland and the Netherlands. The signing of the project was part of celebration of the World Environment Day on 5 June 1998.

#### UNDP documents biodiversity of Mongolia

The first national report on biodiversity in Mongolia was published in June. The report gives a broad description of the socio-economic development trends, environmental status, climate, flora and fauna of Mongolia and details government action so far, including the current status of protection, use and restoration.

## Governance and Economic Transition

Support to the private sector

UNDP has signed with the Government of Mongolia a US \$2.6 million project to smooth the transition to a market economy. The project will provide national and international technical assistance to 10 newly privatised companies. These companies will be selected based on detailed criteria related to economic, social and environmental concerns. The project is intended to create a more dynamic private sector in Mongolia by reforming the operations of firms, introducing modern management techniques, developing models and methodologies for future enterprise reform and training staff. Despite the rapid introduction of market reforms, many private enterprises suffer from inexperience with the market economy. The end result is that these inefficiencies continue to contribute to low production and high unemployment; two consequences of transition that the project hopes to remedy. Funds for the "Enterprise Restructuring" project are being generously provided on a cost-sharing basis from the Government of the Netherlands.

Support to the national Information Technology seminar

UNDP Mongolia together with Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), held its first Information and Technology (IT) Seminar on the Internet in Kuala Lumpur. Tailored to the needs of the Mongolian Government delegation, the seminar was part of the preparation activities to the National IT summit that will take place this summer. Ministerial and private sector representatives, who are part of a working group to advise the Government on assessment, policies and implementation of IT strategy, participated in the seminar.

#### Greater access for Mongolians to the Internet

The APDIP contributed US \$12,000 to UNDP Mongolia to be spent on establishing the fifth Citizen's Information Service Center (CISC) in Dundgovi aimag (province) and to support the UN Information Shop's Internet connection for the public. CISCs offer access to the Internet and E-mail while also providing courses on computer software. UNDP has supported the use of the Internet to help give Mongolians access to their government's laws and the large amount of information produced by the central government in the capital.

### Workshop high lights accomplishments in IT

A homepage competition capped a two-day workshop in May on maximizing the opportunities of IT. UNDP's Information, Communication and Technology for Sustainable Human Development Project has hooked up 20 government ministries to an Intranet and the Internet. There was also a homepage design workshop for more than 150 organizations. The number of Mongolian homepages has surpassed 70 and more come on-line every week.

#### The first Mongolian economics magazine

UNDP Mongolia's Economic and Social Growth Think Tank Project has initiated the first magazine to focus on economic developments in the country. Named "Development Economics", the quarterly magazine probes further into the challenges of a transition to a market economy.

# Support to the development of new journalism in Mongolia

Under the Support to Democracy through Strengthening Journalism Project, training was provided for regional journalists on surviving in the market economy. The thirty plus workshops of the project aim to change the concept of journalism in Mongolia, switching from journalism controlled by the state to a free press in a proper democracy. To assist the Parliament's debate over a new media law, UNDP sponsored an opinion survey of journalists and politicians.

## HIV/AIDS/STDs

#### Public awareness activities

The discovery of two new HIV-positive cases at the end of 1997 led to a national crisis driven by media hysteria. This increased the number of known Mongolians infected with HIV from one to two. In 1998, UNDP Mongolia's HIV/AIDS/STD team has been busy working with NGOs wishing to be involved in prevention andwareness-raising activities. Students were encouraged to amalgamate and form a student's AIDS Club, which was launched at local disco, Top Ten. The UN-funded Mongolian AIDS Bulletin was distributed and a game was played with patrons of the disco. Short dramatic scenes showing how HIV is transmitted was performed by troupe of actors. As well, the training needs of the homosexual community were ascertained.a

#### AIDS Foundation established

At the launch of the National AIDS Foundation several private sector companies and NGOs pledged money for the Foundation. A total of about US \$4,500 was raised, through a combination of cash pledges and in-kind (condoms) donations from organizations such as the Mongolian Red Cross Society, the Olympics Committee, Mongolian Consulting Services, etc. The most impressive donation was made by Erdenet miners, who pledged a day's salary.

# Support to raising public awareness on the prevention of HIV/AIDS/STDs

Eleven NGOs are being contracted to work closely with the segments of society who are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and STD infection. The UNDP component of the UNAIDS programme is funding these small projects to carry out prevention education among target groups. The target groups include commercial sex workers and their customers, businessmen, students, street and homeless children, homosexuals, military officers and prisoners. The projects will be aiming mainly at educating the educators. Formulation of the national IEC strategy

UNICEF, UNDP's HIV/AIDS team, other UN agencies and some women's NGOs have drafted the Terms of Reference for the

working group to formulate the National Information, Education and Communication strategy for HIV/AIDS/STD for the coming two years. The working group has started to implement the



#### in this issue

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May 12, 199

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Ikhertsetseg, one of Mongolia's top models



Come see the most technologically advanced ger in the world!

"Someone should build a place like Disneyland": Are Mongolians drowning in bang?

In 1992 author Nick Middleton published a book called The Last Disco in Outer Mongolia. As is implied in the title, along with some insightful observations about Mongolia before the Russians pulled out, he also bemoans the paucity of bars and discos in the country.

Young Mongolian entrepreneurs lead the business revolution

Under communism, L. Bayasgalan studied fungus. Under capitalism, she's used her scientific knowledge to build her own organic vegetable business.

Meat, milk and Mongolia.

A stroll down any Mongolian residential street is usually the first introduction to a visitor of the savoury adours of the traditional meals of this country.

Money may be tight, but Mongolians are still going online, booting up and sending emails.

Inside Mongolia's former Construction College, a slab of brightly painted concrete overlooking Ulsanbastar, murals on the peeling walls still depict beefy workers engaged in heroic labour. The atem visages of Marx, Engels and Lenin loom above the central staircase.

Depositors' blues: Banks fail to reform and become solvent

Mongolia is currently in the clutches of a full-blown banking crisis. On the surface life appears normal on the streets of the capital Workers busily renovate apartments to open as shops and restaurants, while other workers march to the many building sites throughout Ulaenbeeter.

Mongolia's top fashion designer, Solyolmaa, gives Ger a quick lesson on Mongolian clothing

Last year's fashion runways were dominated by one influence: Mongolian traditional design.

Girl power in Mongolia: What is the status of gender after nine years of transition?

In the last few years relations between Mongolian men and women is attracting very much attention.

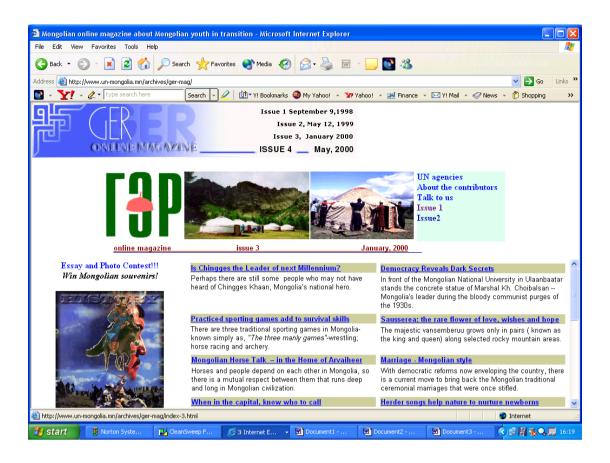
Religion in modern Mongolia: has freedom brought stronger religious beliefs?

In Mongolia already ten years has passed since Mongolians were allowed to practice their beliefs freely. The issue of religion, which was a closed topic for 70 years. came into the open, with many Buddhist monasteries that were closed during the first years of the communist revolution.



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An interesting variation from some of the other publications available is Ger

Magazine (published online with guidance from the United Nations

Development Program, UNDP), which is concerned with Mongolian youth in
cultural transition.

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Mongolia Ulaanbaatar, pop. 808,400. ffl 522B8 Ger UNDP 7 Ertiuu St. PO Box 49/207 Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Publisher E-mafl: info.mnOundp.org Online magazine covering Mongolian youth in transition.





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The joint UNDP and Poverty Alleviation Programme Office fact-finding trip was investigating opportunities for small project loans of US \$120 in Dornogovi and Dundgovi aimags. The loans are funded by the New Zealand government and are ...

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